

May 2021

"Airbnb Go Home:" Tourism Frictions and Short-Term Rentals in New Orleans

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“AIRBNB GO HOME:” TOURISM FRICTIONS AND SHORT-TERM RENTALS IN NEW ORLEANS

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of
the Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Master
of Arts

in

The Department of Geography and Anthropology

by

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank LSU's Geography and Anthropology Department for accepting me into the graduate program and providing funding opportunities that made this research possible. This research was funded in part by a Robert C. West (or R.J. Russell) Graduate Student Field Research Award from the Department of Geography and Anthropology at Louisiana State University. I would like to thank Dr. Helen Regis for inspiring my interest in ethnography and for her instrumental guidance throughout this project. My committee members, Dr. Mary Jill Brody and Dr. Sarah Franzen, I am extremely grateful for their astute advice and boundless support during my time at LSU. And lastly, I would like to thank my friends and family for their continuous words of encouragement during my graduate school experience.

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Abstract

This thesis examines the concerns and conflicts around short-term rental (STR) properties in New Orleans neighborhoods. Using data from collected from critical discourse analysis, semi-structured interviews and social media posts, this paper analyzes the ways the city of New Orleans, residents of the city, STR hosts, and platforms like Airbnb discuss issues of safety, displacement, rising costs of living, as well as responsible STR practices. To understand the complexities of the issues people, have with short-term rental properties, this project approaches STRs from a housing and gentrification lens to understand the role these properties play within in the daily atmospheres of residents' lives. This thesis contributes to the existing scholarship on cities, STRs and sustainable tourism.

Introduction

The growth of Short-Term Rental platforms (or STRs) has accelerated both opportunities and conflicts around tourism and housing laws in places around the globe, such as Venice, Barcelona, London, and San Francisco. In New Orleans, concerns about affordable housing, cultural preservation, and the implementation and regulation of STRs have animated public debates as STRs increasingly bring tourists into residential neighborhoods. Concerns of residents range from noise complaints and increased traffic in their neighborhoods to the notably large increase in the cost of rent and housing in New Orleans over the past decade.

Inspiration for this project came from my own use of short-term rental platforms like Airbnb and VRBO. As a person who has used Airbnb on several occasions, I became increasingly more curious about how my decision to stay in neighborhoods, rather than a hotel, affected the places I visited. Before this project, I thought of Airbnb as a great way to travel in a more financially responsible way. For example, while attending the 2018 AAA conference in San Jose, California the average price for a hotel room was roughly \$120 per night, including conference and student discounts. I could afford to go to that conference because instead of staying in a hotel, I coordinated with nine other graduate students from LSU and UVA to find an entire five-bedroom house on Airbnb at a much more affordable rate of \$140 per person for the entire four day stay. After doing a further investigation on how STRs have affected New Orleans, I can now look back on that experience in San Jose and consider how the presence of a large whole home rental affected the small Hispanic neighborhood located in and how our presence, ten random white strangers from out of state might have felt to neighbors of the otherwise empty home. While navigating a racially diverse, lower income neighborhood allowed us to experience a part of San Jose outside the bubble of downtown hotel conference rooms and

live in a “real” neighborhood, it also afforded us the opportunity to support small local businesses like the taqueria we went to several times during our stay or the corner store where we bought all our groceries.

This thesis seeks to 1) understand the language of housing policy and the rules and regulations around STR properties in New Orleans, 2) illuminate the different ways city, community, and corporation (Airbnb) produced documents are understood and interpreted by residents of New Orleans, and 3) contribute to scholarship and debates about urban governance, policy creation, and sustainable tourism. The guiding research questions I consider throughout this project are divided into two clusters, outlined below:

Question Cluster #1: STRs and resident life (Here I define ‘resident’ as anybody living in New Orleans metropolitan area, but I am particularly interested in residents living within a one or two block radius of an STR.)

- How do residents perceive their changing neighborhood atmospheres as STRs continue to make their way into residential areas?
- How are residents using art and other creative outlets to express their feelings toward large STR platform companies, like Airbnb?

Question Cluster #2: City, Community, and Corporation generated STR documents

- What STR related documents and texts do residents and others encounter on Nola.gov (the city’s official website)?
- How do residents, STR hosts and guests, and sustainable housing activists interpret these documents?

- How are these documents intertextual and what does this form of intertextuality accomplish?
- How do these documents contribute to/clash with/create tension within the linguistic landscape of the city of New Orleans?
- How are texts produced by platforms like Airbnb intertextual with city documents?
- How are documents generated by community organizations different from the city's documents and texts and those produced by Airbnb?

Most of these questions focus on the documents and texts involved in STR ownership and application, as well as community made anti Airbnb documents and text such as newspapers, flyers and graffiti. However, since the main group of people creating a demand for STRs is tourists, I will approach these questions from a sustainable tourism lens in addition to approaching these questions with a critical discourse and urban governance lens.

Background & Context for the work

During March 2020, the entire world entered a different state of being as the Covid-19 virus quickly spread to all corners of the Earth. Covid-19 has affected every person's daily life and this thesis is no exception. The original design for this project included in person interviews and being present at community led affordable housing meetings. New Orleans, while maintaining relatively low numbers in comparison to the rest of Louisiana, became a hot spot for super spreader events and stay at home orders shook daily routines. Because of the undeniable danger this virus posed (and still does) to many people, I changed my project to include a large amount of critical discourse analysis and strictly Zoom only interviews to adhere to all CDC recommended safety guidelines. This switch soon proved to be necessary, as the organizations that I was originally interested in working with to learn how communities were organizing and talking about STRs, had to shift their focus of their own work, as many of their constituents were facing the immediate threat of eviction from landlords, brought on by the shutdown of

much of the tourism, retail and hospitality industries that occurred following the recognition of community spread, and then as the pandemic proved to be something that would last much longer than anybody anticipated.

As we currently are living during a global pandemic and leisure travel is highly discouraged, the effects Covid-19 has had on services like Airbnb cannot be ignored. During a digital interview with CNBC, Airbnb CEO Brian Chesky states, “We spent 12 years building Airbnb's business and lost almost all of it in the matter of 4-6 weeks,” referring to the affects Covid-19 has had on the Airbnb empire (Chesky, 2020). Other sources have predicted that due to the ability to enforce sanitizing and social distancing policies, hotels will have the advantage in the lodging industry (Glusac, 2020). While the majority of journalists are reporting on the negative ways the pandemic has impacted Airbnb, the company is determined to adapt as they implement new cleaning procedures for hosts and offer cancellation options for guests who test positive for Covid. They have also created an archive of resources accessible to the public for both hosts and guests with information on how to safely host and travel during the pandemic. However, these procedures do not protect the residents of the tourist cities once a guest leaves their STR. In New Orleans, the latest spike in the number of Covid cases has been attributed to several acts of irresponsibility including festivities and parties in STR properties (Grace, 2020). Since we are now at one year of living with Covid-19, how STR platforms like Airbnb have shifted from being unsafe living options due to lack of sanitation, to viable options for people seeking an isolated place to quarantine after a positive diagnosis or close encounter, is also interesting and something that came up in discussions with interviewees. While I do not have the time or space here to explore what this means for neighbors or Airbnb, I think it is important to note how the company has managed to adapt, as we all have in this new Covid present world.

Housing, Tourism, and Gentrification: A Brief Review of the Scholarship

Renting and Affordable Housing

New Orleans is a renter majority city with 54 percent of households being in rental housing. Among renters, over 60 percent are cost burdened. Cost burdened is defined as paying more than 30% of a household's monthly income on expenses including rent and other utilities (2018 Greater New Orleans Housing Alliance Report). With over half of the city's residents living in rental housing and spending a large proportion of their income on housing expenses, gaining access to affordable housing units is extremely difficult even with rent subsidies. The limited availability of affordable housing is largely due to the flooding in 2005, the privatization of public housing, uneven rebuilding after hurricane Katrina and the Federally mandated demolition of public housing in the heart of the city since the 1990s (Arena, 2012). Access to affordable housing increases several qualities of life including physical and mental health, education, employment opportunities, security and financial outcomes as well as personal relationships. Lack of affordable housing has a long list of negative effects on individuals, families, and communities such as substandard housing, high rents, racial segregation, unemployment, increased poverty, homelessness and more (Thomas, 2017). In the context of pandemic, it is critical to note that being unhoused i.e., homeless, is directly correlated to increased Covid-19 exposure, to serious complications from Covid-19, and disproportionate deaths.

There are several organizations in New Orleans dedicated to advocating and working for affordable housing. One of the organizations that I cite in this project is called Jane Place Neighborhood Sustainability Initiative, or from this point forward, Jane Place. Jane Place defines themselves as a community land trust and human rights organization that is focused on creating

sustainable, democratic and economically just neighborhoods in New Orleans (jpnsi.org). In 2018, Jane Place staff worked with data analysts to write a report on the presence of STRs in neighborhoods titled, *Short-Term Rentals, Long-Term Impacts: The Corrosion of Housing Access and Affordability in New Orleans*. In their report Jane Place found that the four main ways STRs accelerate gentrification and displacement of residents were instances of single operators with multiple listings, oversaturation of STRs in residential areas, the monetization of residential housing inflating overall costs for renters and homeowners, and lastly, the prioritization of tourists over residents. The report concludes with multiple policy recommendations and actions that residents can take to voice their concerns about STRs in neighborhoods. Some of the suggested policy changes have been implemented since this report was published in 2018. The main changes are that all individual STRs are required to have both an owner and operator permit. The second major change was requiring the STR platforms themselves to have a permit that allows them to advertise New Orleans homes for rent on their website (DeDecker, 2018). While this organization has had to shift their focus to the rising rates of eviction during the COVID-19 pandemic, they are still active in the fight for affordable housing in New Orleans.

Tourism in New Orleans

In 2018 New Orleans beat out fifty-one locations all over the world as it was named the number one place to visit by New York Times magazine. The following year the city welcomed over 19 million visitors who spent a total of 10.05 billion dollars in city restaurants, shops, entertainment venues, and lodging. In a city with millions of visitors annually, the hospitality industry in New Orleans supplies over seventy thousand jobs within the service sector. However, in the NYT article, which was so proudly shared by countless New Orleanians across social

media, it was not the fine hotels or legendary musical artists who have concerts in the city that got New Orleans the number one spot. It was the local music, food, language, and culture that the author dotes on, with the interactive article being complete with a looping clip from a Sunday second line parade as the digital article's header (Yuan, 2018). Yuan successfully convinces a reader that New Orleans is a mystical and endearing place that you simply must visit to fully experience.

Sustainable tourism refers to the practice of visiting a place as a tourist in a way that makes a positive impact on the area environmentally, economically and communally (Zolfani, et al. 2015). Other scholars have extended this definition to include development, meaning that in addition to the commitment to making a low impact on the local environment and culture, sustainable tourism should also be supporting the growth of a tourism industry in a way that benefits local residents (Liu, 2003). However, this underlying adherence to a growth and development within the sustainable model becomes an issue as economic growth within a capitalist society like the US and sustainable producer/consumer practices rarely go hand in hand (Sharpley, 2021). Because of the contradictory relationship between sustainability and the growth of an already massive industry, proper regulation of the different aspects of the tourism industry is one of the suggested paths to sustainable tourism (Sharpley, 2021).

While tourism is a huge industry that touches many sectors of everyday life for a resident of a popular city, housing accommodations are a large part of travelling and where a lot of money can be made. As of 2016, there were 283 hotels in the New Orleans metro area holding just under 40,000 rooms, with more on the way (Evans, 2016). In addition to thousands of hotel rooms, hundreds of short-term rental options are easily available and advertised through Airbnb.com. In a city where tourism is the prominent industry, a common concern of residents is

that city council and government prioritize the tourists rather than the residents of the city that make the tourism industry successful. New Orleans is no exception.

Living with STRs and Airbnb

Airbnb started in 2007 when two recent art school graduates decided to rent out air mattresses in their three-bedroom San Francisco apartment to make rent for the month (Gallagher, 2017). The two students, Brian Chesky and Joe Gebbia originally struggled to get their business model off the ground but by November of 2010 Airbnb launched their iPhone app and had \$7.2 million dollars in venture funding to begin operations in cities around the world. While Airbnb is not the only STR platform (others include HomeAway and VRBO), it is by far the largest with over 7 million listings in over 100,000 cities across 220 countries and regions around the world (Airbnb.com).

The issues cities face with the presence of Airbnb and similar platforms in their neighborhoods is well documented with most of the literature dissecting issues of higher rents, decreased housing availability and gentrification with a focus on major cities such as New York, Washington D.C., and Los Angeles as well as international cities such as Milan, Paris, and Barcelona (Aguilera, et al. 2019; Gurran & Phibbs, 2017; Wachsmuth & Weisler, 2018; Zou, 2020). How these city governments deal with the negative side effects of STRs varies greatly as regulations are hyper localized and made on a city-to-city basis (Nieuwland & Melik, 2018). Localities also vary greatly in their capacity for enforcement.

In New Orleans, the issues of affordable housing and gentrification have been central to public debates around the quality of life in the city (Litten, 2018; Kean & Burrell, 2019; Adelson, 2020). As of 2018, of the 5,215 total listings on Airbnb in the New Orleans, 82% of

them are whole-home rentals (DeDecker et al. 2018). Figure one is a map that depicts the locations of properties with STR permits. The map was created by the author with 2018 data from the New Orleans City Council database. While the map is dated in the sense that accessory and commercial permits are not a part of the current permitting system, which was revised in 2018, the map still provides a good visual to emphasize the overwhelming presence of these properties in New Orleans.

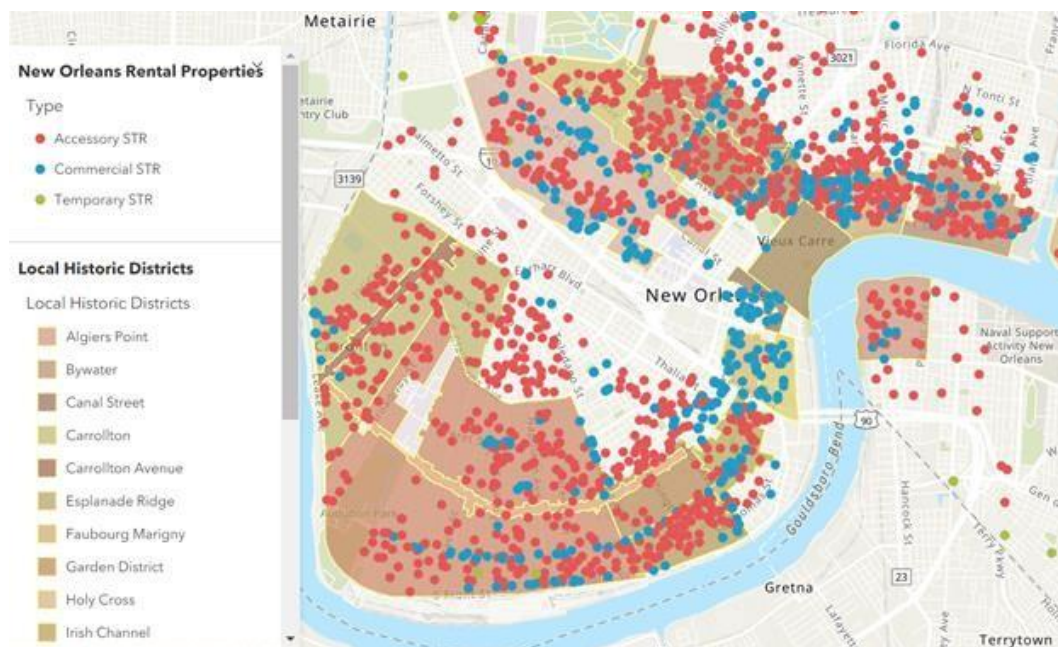


Figure 1. Map of New Orleans metro area with each dot representing a short-term rental property. The majority of the dots are red and blue indicating that the properties are accessory or commercial STRs, which means they operate as STRs full time. Map made using ArcGIS software and data from data.nola.gov.

Gentrification

Gentrification scholarship discusses gentrification as consisting of many economic, social and spatial factors that all contribute to a visible social and physical transformation of an area of a city- or even an entire city (Slater, 2012). The process of an area becoming gentrified looks

different depending on the geographical location. For example, in Vancouver, gentrification looks like the conversion of a once loved but now abandoned department store into a 350-unit condominium that would result in the displacement of many individuals experiencing homelessness who have taken shelter in the abandoned department store (Blomley, 2004). In Providence, Rhode Island it can be seen through the use of the city's art, culture and creativity of young people of color as a means to increase property development to ultimately attract wealthier people to want to move in and economically boost the city (Denmead, 2020).

In New Orleans, the displacement of residents from neighborhoods is a complex issue with several landmark events; such as the shift in the early 1980s to the privatization of public housing beginning in the 1990s with the federal Hope VI initiative, the destruction of neighborhoods by Hurricane Katrina in 2005, the uneven rebuilding which brought back some sections of the city and not others and the focus of this paper, the rising number of short-term rental properties since the popularity spike of Airbnb in the early twenty teens (Arena, 2012). While displacement and gentrification have a complex and seemingly symbiotic relationship, gentrification itself is much more intentional as there are huge financial benefits for more affluent homeowners and renters and larger players like real estate developers and investors. Whether it is a huge real estate developer or a well-off family looking to flip a home, gentrification happens as private and public space is reworked in ways that benefit a white middle to upper class demographic, often under the guise of "urban regeneration."

These processes often involve public-private partnerships and the use of public funds by private developers in Main Street initiatives, community-development block grants (as with the St. Roch Market renovation), and historic tax credits (the American Can Company). That is, public funds are used to stimulate and subsidize real estate developments, raise the value of

properties, increase amenities (as with Crescent Park) in specific areas. Other examples of this happening in private spaces would be the placement of a Whole Foods on North Broad or the newest HGTV show, *Selling the Big Easy*. To further elaborate on these examples, the American Can Company, located in Mid City, is now a luxury apartment building with the ground floor housing commercial and retail space consisting of a coffee shop, wine bar, and restaurant. The rent for a 1 bedroom 823 square foot apartment in this complex is \$1,685 (americancannewoleans.com). Before renovations in the early 2000s, the building sat abandoned for 13 years (nytimes.com). Before Katrina, St. Roch Market was not the pricey multi-vender food hall and full bar that it is today, but a place where cheap po boys and plate lunches were sold. These examples include moving businesses with high income clientele into lower income areas and contributing to gentrification. This type of gentrification is also called retail gentrification or ‘boutiquification,’ which refers to up-scale shops and related businesses moving into a neighborhood and local stores and businesses are displaced (Hubbard, 2016). Just as when a neighbor is displaced from their neighborhood, stores and other key establishments like local bars and corner stores being displaced creates the same kind of loss of social networks. Public space is also reworked by becoming increasingly policed and surveilled in areas experiencing this kind of “urban revitalization.” In New Orleans, this surveillance looks like the presence of street corner security cameras in residential neighborhoods that flash bright red and blue lights at all hours of the day and night.

Some scholars argue that gentrification will often occur in areas of a city where disinvestment in urban infrastructures creates opportunities for profitable redevelopment (Slater, 2012). However, this is not always the case when it comes to STRs in New Orleans. While there are several seemingly abandoned and run-down properties around the city that could

theoretically be renovated, the absence of potted plants and fresh paint does not mean that someone is not living in the property in question. In New Orleans, the properties that are becoming STRs are largely homes and apartments that are already in livable, up-to-code condition that owners choose to rent out short term rather than long term because of the increased additional income compared to a long-term rental property. For example, a two-bedroom apartment in a residential neighborhood will cost about \$1200 a month. That same apartment could be listed on Airbnb for anywhere between \$80-\$120 per night depending on the number of beds, the amenities, and location in Mid-city. For the sake of making math easy, if we assume the property is listed on Airbnb at \$100 per night, and the owner maintains fifty percent capacity for the year, meaning that they rent out the unit for at least 185 days out of the year, they will make \$18,500 per year. If the owner were to rent out long term monthly at \$1200 a month, the owner of the property would make \$14,400 a year. While this is not that large of a difference, the owner has the potential to make much more depending on whether they increase the nightly rate during the peak festival tourist season and whether they have a high rating and are booked a greater number of days.

However, it is important to note that the STR-ization of perfectly good housing in neighborhoods is not the sole factor causing displacement and gentrification. While the argument that renovating and turning a property into an STR does not directly displace anyone may be true, when this type of renewal happens, there are other indirect effects that need to be considered before somebody comes in and turns a large house into an STR unit.

Methodology

This project examines three different types of data including city, community, and corporation produced texts, interviews with STR hosts and residents of New Orleans, and social media posts. The main data set that I weight more heavily in my analysis are the texts which I analyze with a critical discourse analysis approach. To do this I chose three places to pull text samples from the New Orleans City Council website, Airbnb's website, and two physical pieces of text that were either posted or distributed to the public (flyers and local newspapers).

Interview data was used to further examine how residents and Airbnb hosts interpret the rules and regulations around STRs in addition to their own personal experiences with the platform and the presence of STRs. For this project, I conducted seven interviews resulting in over one hundred pages of transcription. These interviews were then coded for themes including, anti-str attitudes, pro-str attitudes, safety, housing costs and rent, policy, and feelings or affect. The third set of data consists of various Instagram posts that give further context about the ways New Orleanians interpret and express how they see STRs affecting their neighborhoods. For this method I used my own personal Instagram account to collect posts from any user creating content related to Airbnb and affordable housing in New Orleans. This method proved to be the most substantial in showing the more creative forms of protest and resistance to STR platforms.

Reflexivity

For research transparency, this section is included to provide a space where I as the researcher can reflect on my own positionality as a young, middle-class, white, woman who is currently living and renting a house in New Orleans. While conducting this research, I wanted to be as neutral as possible when it came to these conflicts around STRs, but as I have learned

throughout my academic journey in anthropology, full objectivity is not something that any social researcher can achieve. Therefore, I want to be upfront about the areas where my own internal biases around the topic come through. I am an avid traveler and have used Airbnb multiple times as it provided the cheapest and best option for my travelling needs. Having access to amenities like a full kitchen is very advantageous to many travelers, myself included. When I travel, I want to have the kind of “local experience” that Airbnb promises in their advertisements. That said, I also believe that safe affordable housing is a human right that should be made accessible to all people through local governments. I think that if an industry, especially one dominated by a multi-billion-dollar company is dependent on tourism and people travelling, they also need to be advocating and educating travelers on traveling sustainably.

Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical discourse analysis (henceforth CDA) is a methodology within linguistic anthropology that involves the meticulous evaluation of language as it is used as a form of social practice. CDA can include all forms of language or communication such as written, spoken, signed, and gestured. (Amoussou & Allagbe, 2018). A major part of CDA that separates it from other language studies is the evaluation of how discourse is shaped by power and power by discourse (Fairclough, 1992).

In this thesis, I focus on the multimodality and intertextuality of STR related documents produced by the city of New Orleans in comparison to documents and texts created by community members and local newspapers as well as documents created by Airbnb. The texts I choose to critically analyze differs but ultimately, I wanted to create a sample of documents to analyze that I thought would be commonly accessed by the public, such as introduction pages. The community produced texts were chosen because of their role as being a part of the linguistic

landscape of New Orleans. CDA as a method is vital to this research because it shows the complex way language is used in macro and micro processes of power. By looking critically at the city council's written rules and regulations for STRs, we can see how vocabulary, sentence structure, page organization, content, grammar, and intertextuality are used in ways that reinforce power imbalance and inequality, especially within housing.

Intertextuality within CDA refers to how a text can be constructed and interpreted against the background of another text resulting in the meaning being achieved as a result of referencing another piece of text (Jaworski & Coupland, 2014). In other words, discourse does not happen in isolation; there are other texts and pieces of discourse influencing and acting on any piece of discourse we as researchers choose to analyze (Briggs & Bauman; 1992). Depending on where a discourse situates itself socially, politically, and culturally, the amount of power and control that discourse has can increase or decrease (Foucault, 1980).

Multimodal discourse analysis refers to the extension of language analysis to include the combination of language with other resources such as images, gesture, action, music and sound (O'Halloran, 2011). Public signs are one example where multimodality is a powerful lens to use when thinking about how signs are placed to police and govern populations in cities. Whether it be on a conscious or unconscious level, public signs influence our behaviors and how we interact with a space (Mautner, 2014).

The term linguistic landscape refers to "the visibility and salience of languages on public and commercial signs in a given territory or region" (Landry & Bourhis, 1997). Public signage has been looked at by many scholars interested in the dialectical relationship between individual signs and the linguistic environments which they appear in (Spolsky, 2020; Yanguas, 2009).

Thinking about public city issued signage and the linguistic landscape of house fronts and neighborhoods in New Orleans incites questions around the socio-legal and socio-spatial relationships of STR permits and the people who display, see, read and interpret them (Mautner, 2014).

This project also examines the linguistic landscape of neighborhoods and the contribution that STR permits displayed in house windows make to the overall linguistic environment. To complete this portion of the project, photographs of house fronts consisting of lots of signage, stickers, and other yard decor were collected while walking through selected neighborhoods. Neighborhoods that were selected for this project were based off the 2018 Jane Place report and the neighborhoods most mentioned by interviewees. The neighborhoods being Mid-City, the Bywater, the Marigny, and Tremé. These pictures were then coded and compared to photographs of STR house fronts that were identified by the presence of a city issued STR permit.

Semi-Structured Interviews

In order to fully understand how New Orleans residents feel about the presence of STRs in their neighborhood as well as how STR hosts interpret the rules, regulations and requirements for operating an STR property, semi structured interviews make up a portion of data analyzed for this thesis. Because these interviews were conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic, they were all conducted over Zoom or Facetime to ensure that nobody, participants or researcher, took any unnecessary risk of being exposed or exposing others to Covid-19. The questions asked were open-ended and focused on the participant's direct experiences with STRs, whether as a user, neighbor or host. The questions were slightly different depending on which category the participant fell under; however, one question was asked to every participant, "What does a

responsibly run STR property look like to you?” For this project, seven interviews were conducted. Of the seven participants, two worked as urban planners, one is a teacher, one an artist, one occupational therapist and another a museum employee. Two of my interviews were with hosts of STR units in the city and one of my hosts manages properties, both short and long term, for her full-time occupation.

Obtaining willing participants for interviews was slightly difficult as I was unable to attend any public events that would have facilitated meeting people to interview. I began the search for interviewees by messaging friends and acquaintances on social media who I know live in New Orleans. This method resulted in two interviews. These progressed into three more interviews. To find hosts, owners, or property managers of STRs I posted to a public Facebook page called, “Airbnb Hosts: New Orleans.” The post was brief and asked if anybody would be open to chatting with me about their experience as a host in New Orleans. This method of contacting people generated one interview. The other method used to get interviews with STR hosts was by contacting them directly through the information provided on the STR permits that are displaying in the windows of STR properties. This method was successful as the person I was interested in interviewing and contacted via email was amenable to talking with me.

The challenge of conducting semi structured interviews were mainly present in the beginning phases of this project. Some participants did express the concern that information given could be traced back to them or their place of work. This anxiety was easily settled after I explained that pseudonyms would be used in the final write up of the project and original transcripts would only be seen by myself and potentially members of my thesis committee. The fact that all interviews were held via Zoom was both a challenge and advantage to the project. The challenge was that I lost a lot of the rapport and trust that is built when meeting with

someone face to face. I also lost some insight into how the participant was feeling during the interview by not being able to see their entire body as one would in person. When interviewing people, their comfort is of the utmost importance to me, so observing body language to inform me if a participant is nervous or uncomfortable is something I try to practice in all interviews. Only seeing my participants from the chest up, I was not able to pay as much attention to their comfort levels as I would in person. In looking for methodology literature, I found little material on the ways video call technology affects an ethnographic interview. The advantage to Zoom interviewing, other than the elimination of possibly spreading Covid-19, was that the challenge of deciding on a location, time, and other logistical factors that go into meeting someone in person, were reduced. By meeting via Zoom, participants did not have to make major adjustments to their schedules to meet with me, which, I believe, made them more willing to participate in being interviewed in the first place.

I analyzed interviews and quotes were pulled and coded into categories including but not limited to safety, atmosphere/neighborhood feelings, displacement, gentrification, money/cost of living and eviction. It is important to clarify that these interviews were not analyzed with a critical discourse approach because interview data is being used to extend and give further context to the theme.

Social Media, Archival Research, and Digital Ethnography

In doing the preliminary research for this project, I turned to the social media platform, Instagram. By looking through the social media accounts of Jane Place Neighborhood Sustainability Initiative, Nola News (New Orleans' official city news Instagram account), Mayor Cantrell and the social media accounts of neighborhood organizations and residents, I created an

archive of posts related to STRs and housing in New Orleans. While this set of data is weighted the least in the analysis, the context these posts provide represent the ways individuals in New Orleans interpret and express their frustrations with the presence of STRs in their neighborhoods. The photos I choose to elaborate on in this thesis were chosen because they display the type of artistic resistance that residents against the presence of STRs in their neighborhoods are displaying. While doing this research I found the interviews to be an efficient source for this type of data and as a result, the data gathered from social media is mainly used for contextual purposes in this thesis. However, the posts themselves are interesting pieces of discourse and create possibilities for a future research project centering on social media posts in the conclusion.

To find posts that are related to STRs I began by using hashtags and other forms of tagging such as user tags and geotags within the social media platform (Bonilla & Rosa, 2015). The main platform I used to gather this data is Instagram as I am comfortable and efficient with this platform and have been following the above-mentioned accounts for over two years. Because my only criteria for a post to go into the archive was that it was related to short-term rentals, housing, or Airbnb, the posts vary from anti-Airbnb graffiti to advertisements for the newest HGTV show, “Selling the Big Easy.” After collecting a sample of 30 posts I coded them into the following categories; Anti-Airbnb/STR, Pro-Airbnb/STR, renter rights/activism, and affordable housing.

A Discussion on Discourse

In this section I analyze discourse from City of New Orleans website, Airbnb's official website, and community produced texts employing the method of critically looking at the language used by these speakers/writers further shows the ways: 1) residents engage with the changing landscape of their neighborhoods as houses and apartments are turned into STR properties, 2) institutions use language to negotiate power and responsibility, and 3) corporations like Airbnb use language to persuade potential hosts that Airbnb is the best choice for advertising their STR property.

City Produced Texts

The samples of discourse used to represent the city of New Orleans were selected from the short-term rental section of their website. The section includes a comprehensive list of sub sections ranging from STR geographical data, to Applying for an STR permit, and even a complete fifty-three-page short-term rental handbook. For the analysis in this section, I will be focusing on the webpages, which reference the handbook. While the handbook provides more details than the webpages, I chose to focus on the webpages because they are most likely to be read by someone visiting this area of Nola.gov. From the short-term rental section of Nola.gov, three webpages were selected for critical analysis of sentence structure, vocabulary and word choice, pronouns, how the text was intertextual, and ways in which the webpages were multimodal. Screen shots of webpages are provided within the analysis for reference and to improve reading experience with the full transcripts of all discourse materials located in the appendix.

Critical discourse sample 1- Introduction to STRs

Short Term Rentals

Like the rules regarding many other types of business, the rules regarding the business of STR can be complicated. In addition to a basic understanding of the fundamentals, it is essential for anyone engaged in the business of STR to keep their knowledge base up to date. The STR Office is dedicated to providing complete informational materials to the public and, as a part of the OneStop, provides individuals the opportunity to discuss specific questions and issues in person with a member of our team.

The STR permitting process can involve all the various elements of property use including tax, licensing, and permit history, zoning restrictions, and code compliance. The deep and unique history of New Orleans has traditionally made accurate record-keeping a challenge and it is not unusual for the licensing process to reveal unanswered questions about a property. The City's interest is in ensuring the public's questions are fully answered, and your patience is appreciated for any specific and/or detailed inquiries.

This website is intended to serve as a primer for those who are new to the business of STR and as a compliance guide for STR permit holders. This website is for informational use - the enabling legislation which regulates STR in the City is the ultimate authority. STR permit holders and applicants are expected to know and understand the current rules and requirements of the business at the time they apply for an STR permit.

The complete enabling legislation can be found at the links below.

MUNICIPAL CODE OF NEW ORLEANS (CCNO)

Access the complete CCNO at library.municode.com/la/new_orleans. (https://library.municode.com/la/new_orleans) Within the CCNO are other important regulations regarding building and property construction, use, and maintenance, as well as fire safety, accessibility requirements, and more. The STR-specific revisions to the Municipal Code of New Orleans may be found at Ordinance No. 28157 MCS. (/nola/media/311/STR-Code-MCS.PDF)

COMPREHENSIVE ZONING ORDINANCE (CZO)

Access the complete CZO at czo.nola.gov/home/. (<https://czo.nola.gov/home/>) The CZO also contains important regulations regarding historic preservation, property use, parking requirements, and more. The STR-specific revisions to the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance for the City of New Orleans may be found at Ordinance No. 28156 MCS. (/nola/media/311/STR-CZO-MCS_1.pdf)


Figure 2. Short-term rentals introduction webpage from nola.gov. Webpage accessed April 2021.

This introduction webpage was chosen because, theoretically if you were going to start operating a STR unit then this would be the first page you would interact with when looking to officially apply. The page itself does provide basic information by directing visitors to other links with more information about zoning and municipal codes, but besides directing a visitor to other webpages, the page acts more like a disclaimer to the inevitable frustrations a person is likely to experience when applying to operate a STR. For example, the first sentence of the first paragraph states, “Like the rules regarding many other types of business, the rules regarding the business of STRs can be complicated.” This statement repeats what is said in the official STR handbook as well, giving it a layer of intertextuality and the repetition of the idea that the process

to apply for and operate an STR is complicated. This tone carries throughout the webpages, almost giving an implicit message that discourages people to want to operate an STR.

Institutions of power often use language as a tool to persuade individuals of all kinds of implicit beliefs and biases. In this piece of discourse, there are several phrases used where we can see power being negotiated between a visitor of this webpage and the City of New Orleans. For example, in the first paragraph, it is stated that, “it is essential for anyone engaged in the business of STR to keep their knowledge base up to date.” This makes the explicit statement that an individual is responsible for keeping up with the rules and regulations around STRs and removes responsibility from the city. It also underscores the importance of being up to date on regulations by characterizing individual responsibility as “essential.” Another instance of this kind of displacement of responsibility can be seen in the second paragraph where the City cites the “deep and unique history of New Orleans,” as the reason why the permitting process can be so complicated, rather than that New Orleans officials make it so with their regulations. The last instance of language of power is in the third paragraph when the text refers to the “enabling legislation” as the “ultimate authority” on STR matters. These matters and phrases work to alleviate the responsibilities of the city to provide clear, accurate, and timely information on processes related to STRs and use the city’s history and architecture as scapegoats.

Critical discourse sample 2- Applying for an STR permit

**City of New Orleans**
Mayor LaToya Cantrell

Home » Short Term Rentals » Applying For an STR Permit

Short Term Rentals

The review process for STR permits can be complex. The deep history and unique architecture of New Orleans means that one formula rarely fits all. The staff and Office of the OneStop Shop and the STR Office endeavor to complete all reviews within two weeks of filing. As our offices and the public gain more experience with the new regulations and processes involved, our goal is to be able to provide same-day issuance of any permit or permit which does not require an inter-departmental review.

STEP 1: FILING AN APPLICATION

Applications can be filed online at onestopapp.nola.gov (<https://onestopapp.nola.gov>) or in person at the OneStop Shop on the 7th floor of City Hall, 1300 Perdido St. If you file online, you will receive a confirmation email when your application is successfully filed. If you do not receive a confirmation email, it means that your application has not been filed.

The date that the application is registered in our system as successfully filed is the filing date of that application. In the interest of ensuring that all applications are received with an accurate filing date, we will not be able to accept applications that are dropped off, emailed, faxed, or sent by mail.

STEP 2: APPLICATION REVIEW

When filed, each application is assigned to a permit analyst who will review the application for eligibility and completeness. When the analyst completes their review, the application is assigned to a member of the STR Office, who will confirm the analyst's review before approving a final determination. We ask for two weeks to complete this review process. To check the progress of an application review, visit onestopapp.nola.gov (<https://onestopapp.nola.gov>) and use the search bar at the top of the page to search by reference code, permit number, applicant name, or property address.

During this process we will communicate with applicants from a "do not reply" email address. Applicants whose applications require additional documentation or action will be given detailed instructions. To ensure you receive these important emails, please whitelist or regularly check your spam/junk folders for emails from NOREPLY@nola.gov. Every email will include the direct email address of the reviewer who sent it so be sure to direct replies to that reviewer's email and not to the "do not reply" address.

STEP 3: DETERMINATION

All determinations on STR applications will be emailed from NOREPLY@nola.gov. Application approvals will contain instructions on payment and downloading the permit placard. Application denials will provide reasons for the denial and instructions on how to appeal the denial and/or re-apply. Determinations may be appealed through the Board of Zoning Adjustments within 45 days. [More information about this process can be found at nola.gov/city-planning/applications](https://nola.gov/city-planning/applications) or by visiting the CPC at the OneStop. (city-planning/applications/)

Last updated: 12/1/2019 1:04:30 AM

Figure 3. Short-term rental application webpage from nola.gov. Webpage accessed April 2021.

This webpage shown in figure three was chosen for two reasons. The first is that it is the introductory page to the section on applying for an STR; this is the part of owning or operating an STR that my two host interviewees spoke of as being the most complicated part of operating an STR in New Orleans. The second reason is that it contrasts with Airbnb's version of this page, which is analyzed in a later section. The first sentence of this section, similar to and intertextual with the opening sentence of the introduction page, begins with a warning that the process to apply is complex. The next sentence is also internally intertextual with the first piece of discourse in that it locates the source of the complex nature of the process as the "deep history and unique architecture" of New Orleans, rather than the complex zoning laws that have been put

in place over several years by the City. After reminding the reader that the process is complicated and it is because New Orleans architecture is old and unique, the most pressing concern of this page seems to be reminding individuals in the process of getting a permit to operate an STR, to check their spam folder in their emails to be sure they do not miss an email from the “No reply” account the STR administration use. Communicating from a “No Reply” account suggests unidirectional messages rather than an actual dialogue.

After spending less than fifteen minutes on the New Orleans website, I read multiple warnings of the complexity and difficulties involved in applying for and operating an STR, showing the repetitive nature of the discourse style. During my interviewees with STR hosts, they both described the permitting process as a challenge. One host simply used the word “hell” to describe her experience getting the proper licenses recently in 2020; the other host I interviewed, who has been a host for almost eight years, described the process as easy in the beginning but now extremely difficult and confusing. Between the implicit persuasive language of the New Orleans City website and the reports of the process to operate legally in New Orleans to be far from easy, I am left wondering why anyone would want to go through the hassle of registering as an STR and see how potential hosts would be tempted to run illegally.

Of the three pieces of discourse, I analyzed from the nola.gov website, this page was the most informative about the power dynamics within the STR administration. After filing your application with the STR office, the application is reviewed by a permit analyst, who checks the permit for completeness and eligibility. The details of what makes an application complete and eligible are not listed. Then after the analyst completes the review, the application is sent to a member of the STR office who reviews it for final determination. Judging from this short section on where your application goes after you complete it, it seems to be that the permit analysts who

have the initial contact with applications, hold the most power as they are the ones to pass on an application to a STR administrator for the final review and approval. Overall, the way this section is written makes it sound like the STR office is very methodical and if something is missed, postponed, or denied, then it is up to the individual applying to be checking their spam folder for a notification from the office. All of these actions a part of the responsibility of keeping your “knowledge base up to date” as an STR operator or potential STR operator.

After viewing this webpage, I decided to read the permitting sections of the official city handbook to see if there was more information on the permitting process. The handbook is linked in the side menu of the website. While the handbook goes into more depth about the application process, there were some requirements that seem important to mention to people viewing this page who are thinking about applying for a STR license. For example, to legally operate an STR in New Orleans, a property must have not one but two types of permits (Owner and Operator). Another important qualification for a space to be permitted as a STR unit is that the space must be a “dwelling unit”. This means the property must have a full, permanent kitchen (or access to one), a municipal address, and its own separate Enter

Critical discourse sample 3- Owner and Operator Violations

Short Term Rentals

A complete list of violations associated with STR ownership can be found at CCNO Sec. 26-618(B).
([https://library.municode.com/la/new_orleans/codes/code_of_ordinances?](https://library.municode.com/la/new_orleans/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PTTICO_CH26BUBUREHOST_ARTXISTSHRMRE_DIV2SHRMREOWPE_S26-618LEDUSHRMREOWPEHO)
[nodeId=PTTICO_CH26BUBUREHOST_ARTXISTSHRMRE_DIV2SHRMREOWPE_S26-](https://library.municode.com/la/new_orleans/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PTTICO_CH26BUBUREHOST_ARTXISTSHRMRE_DIV2SHRMREOWPE_S26-618LEDUSHRMREOWPEHO)
[618LEDUSHRMREOWPEHO](https://library.municode.com/la/new_orleans/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PTTICO_CH26BUBUREHOST_ARTXISTSHRMRE_DIV2SHRMREOWPE_S26-618LEDUSHRMREOWPEHO)).

A complete list of violations associated with STR operation can be found CCNO Sec. 26-620(B).
([https://library.municode.com/la/new_orleans/codes/code_of_ordinances?](https://library.municode.com/la/new_orleans/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PTTICO_CH26BUBUREHOST_ARTXISTSHRMRE_DIV3SHRMREOPPE_S26-620LEDUSHRMREOPPEHO)
[nodeId=PTTICO_CH26BUBUREHOST_ARTXISTSHRMRE_DIV3SHRMREOPPE_S26-](https://library.municode.com/la/new_orleans/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PTTICO_CH26BUBUREHOST_ARTXISTSHRMRE_DIV3SHRMREOPPE_S26-620LEDUSHRMREOPPEHO)
[620LEDUSHRMREOPPEHO](https://library.municode.com/la/new_orleans/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PTTICO_CH26BUBUREHOST_ARTXISTSHRMRE_DIV3SHRMREOPPE_S26-620LEDUSHRMREOPPEHO)).

STR Owners and STR Operators must not engage in or allow conduct which results in:

- Advertising an illegal or unpermitted STR;
- Advertising more STR Units on a lot than is legally permitted;
- Advertising or providing more Guest Bedrooms than allowed the STR permit;
- Advertising for or allowing a higher Guest occupancy than allowed by the STR permit;
- Exceeding the limits on the number of STR Units per lot;
- Allowing the use of an STR as an event venue or other commercial use during a STR stay;
- Advertising or allowing the use of an STR by the hour or for less than one night;
- Renting of an STR Unit to more than one Party of Guests at a time;
- STR use which generates excessive loud sound, offensive odors, public drunkenness, unlawful loitering, lewd conduct by guests or any effect that otherwise unreasonably interferes with neighbors' quiet enjoyment of their properties;
- STR use which places loads on structural elements of the building in excess of those allowed by the Building Code;
- Violation of a Noise Abatement, Security, Operations, or Sanitation Plans (if applicable);
- Discrimination against any Guest or potential Guest because of race, color, sex, gender identity, age, religion, disability, national origin, ancestry, sexual orientation, marital status, parental status, military discharge status, or source of income;
- Failure to comply with the CCNO (<https://library.municode.com>), CZO (<https://czo.nola.gov/home/>), or any other federal, state, or local law.

Figure 4. Short-term rental owner and operation violations webpage from nola.gov. Webpage accessed April 2021.

I also chose the owner and operator violations page for several reasons. The first reason is that my original interest was directed toward the ways that rules and regulations for STRs are written and how that language is interpreted by people visiting this website. Another reason I chose this webpage was because in interviewing people who were undoubtedly anti-Airbnb, they spoke about these violations as being one of the only ways to fight STRs in their neighborhood. One interviewee described friends who take it upon themselves to actively look for STRs

committing one of these violations with the intention to report and hopefully remove the property from the STR sphere.

When I first visited this list, I thought it to be a bit short for a violations page for something so heavily contested in the city. However, the first two items on the page are links directing the reader to more complete lists of violations- I imagine prospective STR operators click and thoroughly read through those links the same way most people read the “terms and agreement” page that pops up when you sign up for a new service on the internet. The list of violations starts off rather straight forward, listing advertising illegal or unpermitted STRs as the first violation. The next items listed are all violations related to exceeding the permitted number of guests, properties, rooms, etc.

The ninth bullet is the most interesting because it relates to some of the more publicly debated issues around STR properties- the presence of tourists in residential areas creating loud noise, excessive trash, engaging in public drunkenness, and doing anything that “Interferes with neighbors’ quiet enjoyment of their properties.” This phrase is particularly interesting because it is the first time, I have seen the word “neighbors” mentioned in any STR webpages written by the City. Another interesting thing to think about with this bullet is the fact that by simply being present and operating in a neighborhood, STR properties increase rent and cost of living because they decrease the availability of housing, making available units more expensive. This combined with other factors, like a natural disaster or the destruction of public housing, leads to displacement. Two of my interviewees reported being asked to move out of their rental properties so their landlord could turn the property into an STR- are those instances considered to be “interfering with the neighbor’s enjoyment of their properties?”

The only violations listed that had to do with people and are not about property use or permitting are bullets 9 and 12. Bullet nine discusses small noise and behavioral violations. The 12th is a discrimination policy stating that hosts cannot discriminate against guests because of race, color, sex, gender identity, age, religion, disability, national origin, ancestry, sexual orientation, marital or parental status, military or discharge status, or source of income.

Community produced texts:

The following two pieces of discourse represent texts created by New Orleans residents. The first is a laminated flyer attached to a lamppost in the historic neighborhood Treme. The second piece is an article from a local community produced newspaper called *The Shotgun*. It is important that this sample of community produced texts is limited in that both pieces are obviously anti-Airbnb. There are New Orleans community members who do not share the same concerns about how Airbnb and STRs affect their neighborhoods. In my search for community produced texts relating to Airbnb as either for or against their presence, I only found pieces of discourse under the anti-Airbnb category. Other samples of discourse created by community members that I collected for this project but do not critically analyze here include a 2018 STR report by JPNSI as well as yard signs with phrases like “Keep neighbors in Neighborhoods” or just a simple Airbnb logo with a red X through it. While I was not able to find any public pro STR texts, there are obviously people who hold those beliefs because STRs abound in the city.

Critical Discourse Sample 4- Dear Tourist flyer



Figure 5. “Dear Tourist” flyer posted on a wooden utility post in the Treme neighborhood. Photo taken in 2019.

The piece of discourse in figure 5 is exciting to analyze because of the changes in font style, size, and color throughout the flyer which, make the document fun and visually interesting to the reader, pulling them in with a big bold welcome. Two words, ‘jazzy’ and ‘fonky’ are in caps in squiggly style font that stands out from the other fonts. The mixture of font styles creates a document that keeps a reader’s attention but also conveys a playful and deliberate un-professional aesthetic, paired with the encasing plastic binder sleeve, highlights the DIY-ness of the post. The text is also in two colors with most of the text appearing in black and key words appearing in red. Like the font styles and colors, the author considered how line spacing, and

alignment would impact the message of the text. The text is not in the standard left aligned, one-inch margin style or even a simple center aligned style. By aligning certain words to be in the center of the page or appear alone on a line (line 13) or underlining them, the author creates an emphasis that would not be expressed if the text were aligned in a more standard way.

Overall, the document has a satirical tone with the message getting more and more accusatory once you get to the centered bold red “YOU” on line 13. While the beginning is technically a welcome message, by line 7 and 8 the document brings up Hurricane Katrina, which is where the document turns from a welcoming tourist memo to a sign informing the reader of a much larger issue within New Orleans neighborhoods. Line 23 is perhaps an example of the most intense language in the document as the author calls the use of STR’s a ‘GODDAMN SHAME.’ This is important to note that the use of ‘goddamn’ instead of just ‘damn’ or a milder expletive has even more of an impact on readers because of its blasphemous nature and the fact that Catholicism is the predominant religion in the area.

The location where this sign was posted is important context for the message of the flyer. The Treme-Lafitte area is a historically black neighborhood and was deemed a historic district in 1998. The area is known for its jazz clubs and classic Louisiana cuisine restaurants as well as cultural attractions such as Backstreet Cultural museum and the Treme Petit Jazz Museum. On lines 7 and 8 the author mentions how the neighborhood was able to survive the devastating effects of Hurricane Katrina because of its location on high ground. However, the storm still forced many of the residents in this neighborhood to temporarily relocate. For some this ended up being a permanent displacement. This flyer makes a strong connection between the existence of STRs and the inability for some people to afford to be able to return to the houses that they grew up in because they are now owned and operated by nonresidents as STRs. The location of

this flyer is also in a predominantly Black neighborhood of New Orleans, which is important to consider when thinking about the intertextuality of this sign with the next piece of discourse, as they both address hurricane Katrina's role, but only the *Shotgun* article elaborates on how race plays a role in which neighborhoods are the most affected by displacement caused by Katrina in the first place.

Sample 5- The Shotgun newspaper article (See appendix for full text)



Figure 6. Photograph of the front page of the Spring 2019 edition of *The Shotgun* newspaper.



Figure 7. Photograph of the first page of the article Crisis of Dispossession in *The Shotgun* newspaper.

The Shotgun is a small local newspaper published seasonally and available around town in local businesses like coffee shops, cafes, bars, and small boutiques. Their mission statement, “The Shotgun disseminates local investigation and analysis, exposes, reports and schemes for destroying the status quo; the ways you spend your time without spending money; maps, interviews and evidence; revealing documents, alternatives and combative recipes,” gives a viewer a sense of what the publication consists of (Figure 6).

The paper is very much a radical, anarchist, anti-capitalism, anti-police, anti-racist type of publication. The publication is not concerned with looking like a newspaper like the *Advocate* or the *Times-Picayune*. *The Shotgun* accepts submissions from the public- everything from comics to poems to pieces about issues like gentrification, the presence of police in the city, and privatization of ICE detention centers- and these are all just from the one issue that I have a physical copy of. The authors of the pieces in *The Shotgun* have the option to publish their work

with a pseudonym or with some other name that keeps them anonymous. Examples include names like ‘Z3RO #XPL01T’ (Zero Exploit in standard English) and ‘Autonomists Anonymous’.

The photo on the front page is what persuaded me to pick up this issue of the paper out of the linguistic landscape of New Orleans. The front page features two large photographs- at the top is a photo of someone taking down a flimsy sign that reads, “FA\$T CASH WE BUY HOUSES 504-266-612*” with the title of the photo being “STEP 1.” The second photo is a pile of signs like the one being taken down in the first photo, on the ground and on fire, with the photo title being “STEP 2.” At first I did not know what to think about these images, signs with phrases like, “WE BUY HOUSES” or “CASH for HOUSES” are common all over the city, making them a part of the linguistic landscape of several neighborhoods. Seeing these signs so often, I always had questions about who is making these offers to buy a house in any condition and buy it in cash- surely it was a developer with the intention to renovate and flip the houses. After flipping through the issue of the Shotgun paper, the connection between these signs and STRs became clear.

The article I focus on in this section is titled, “Crisis of dispossession: How White capital and policy has intensified housing precarity post Katrina.” The title has a lot of buzz words that immediately tell the reader that the piece is likely going to be anti-Airbnb as the words “crisis” and “dispossession” are in the main title. The subtitle, “How White capital and policy has intensified housing precarity post Katrina,” tells a reader that this article is going to link the presence and infiltration of Airbnb into neighborhoods to gentrification and the displacement of predominantly Black low-income people and families. This connection is also made clear by the following quote located in the center of the page, bolded, and in much larger font than the rest of

the article (common newspaper formatting for pull quotes), “This process has culminated in displacing the black social core who built this city and made it into the cultural capital that 17 million tourists flock to every year. Displacing so effectively that there are now 100,000 less black people in New Orleans than there were before Katrina.”

The language and vocabulary used in this article to describe what is happening to the housing market in New Orleans is relatively basic social justice vocabulary, words like “gentrification,” “racialized displacement,” “redlining,” and “housing commodification” are used within the first paragraph of the article. I believe terms and phrases like these are more fully understood and accepted by the audience of people reading this kind of publication rather than audiences that get their information from more mainstream (business-friendly) sources for news. At one point the article refers to Airbnb as a “frenzy,” as it has rapidly managed to wedge its way into the housing market and inflate rent. Typically, a frenzy is not associated with something positive, showing the not so underlying tone of the piece. The article also refers to the growth of Airbnb in the city as “cancerous.” The use of the word ‘cancerous’ to describe Airbnb is perhaps the most telling descriptor of how the authors of this article see what the presence of STRs does to a neighborhood. As cancer is a serious illness that drains the life out of someone, slowly overcoming the body as it spreads from the source and finds its way into vital organs until the body is simply a shell hosting a disease that takes massive effort to fully remove. The authors of this article see STRs as the cancer and neighborhoods and homes as bodies to host the disease. This use of metaphor is extremely powerful and persuasive as many other scholars have used cancer in the body to mirror other institutionalized processes (Sontag, 1978).

The article is intertextual with several other pieces of discourse, including Figure five, where the unknown author of the anti-Airbnb sign in the Treme makes the direct correlation

between hurricane Katrina, the displacement of long-term residents, and the presence of Airbnb, making it difficult or impossible for displaced residents to return. The fact that this connection is made in two separate pieces of text produced by regular New Orleans citizens, but not by any official New Orleans city council publication or any of their web pages that I analyzed, shows that this connection is essentially being ignored by the city. Another piece of discourse this article references is when the authors use excerpts from an interview with Breonne DeDecker to get a better understanding of housing precarity and STRs in New Orleans. By interviewing and directly quoting DeDecker, there is a layer of intertextuality with the 2018 Jane Place report that adds a level of legitimacy to the article by backing up the anonymous authors' claims with quantitative data from the Jane Place report.

The article is multimodal in several ways. The first and most prominent is that it includes three images, all depicting anti-STR imagery to emphasize the author's comments. The article also cites heavily from an interview with Jane Place program director, Breonne DeDecker to elaborate on the argument that STRs create more housing precarity than stability. The first and last image were taken at a march for renter's rights organized by the New Orleans Tenants Assembly. The first picture does not show the faces of people in the photograph but two signs in the photo read "No STRs" and "Homes for people not for profit." The second phrase also appears on the Jane Place website, making it intertextual with their website and is also available on t-shirts. Because of the phrase is one coined and made popular by Janes Place, I assume they were either involved in organizing the march or at the very least had people involved in their organization present at the march. The second photograph is simply a "No STRs!" sign that was placed in between fencing rails somewhere in the city, presumably near where the march took place. The third photograph is the most interesting to me as it shows the front of the march

walking down a city street. In the center are two people holding a banner that reads “New Orleans Tenants Assembly.” To the left of the photo is a person holding a sign that reads “We want Neighbors, Not Spectators.” A crowd of people behind them follow with other signs that are not legible in the photograph. The use of these photographs is strategic as they say things that are not explicitly said in the article. While the article reads as anti-STR, there is no explicit statement mentioning banning them completely, however, the phrase “We want neighbors, not spectators” and “No STRs!” implies that some people want STRs to be non-existent, not just regulated.

Along with the article on STRs, the Shotgun’s center page photograph was also dedicated to the eradication of STRs (Figure 8). The page usually features an artistic photograph of some event from around the city- but in this issue, they went with a large photo of the underbelly of an airplane in flight with the phrase “Airbnb Go Home” printed over it in bold capital letters. The phrase is simple, but effective at displaying the idea that Airbnb does not belong in New Orleans. The location of where “home” is that this photo is referring to is not known- is it San Francisco, where the Airbnb corporation started? Or is ‘home’ referring to people’s actual homes, and the message is that STRs should only exist in the forms of single rooms in or connected to full time residents’ homes? Or does ‘home’ simply refer to anywhere that is not New Orleans that occupants of STRs come from? The image of the airplane itself could evoke thoughts and connections of rapid modern air travel and tourism, meaning the message is directed toward travelers and telling the tourists to go home. The multiplicity of meanings one could derive from the message all ultimately point to the same message: Airbnb and STRs need to go.

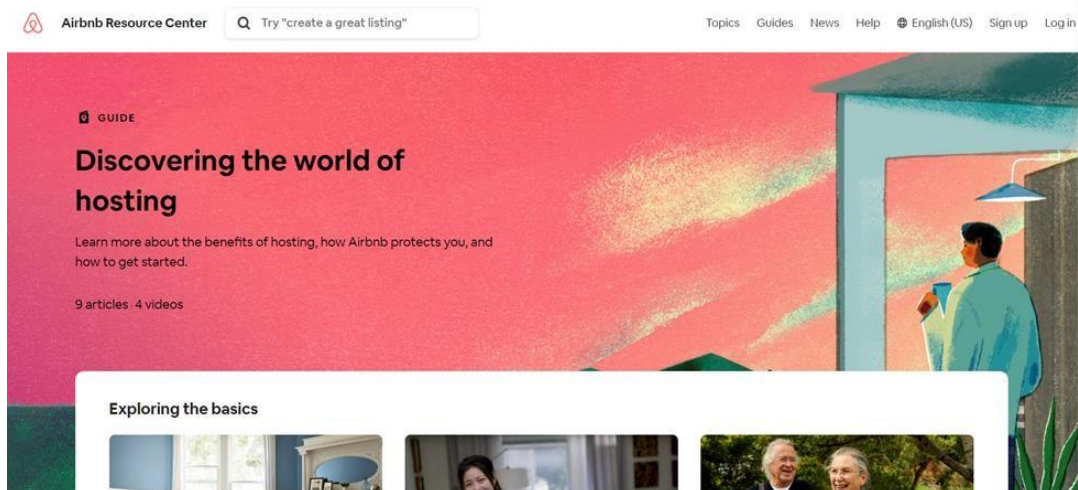


Figure 8. Photograph from the Spring 2019 issue of *The Shotgun* newspaper. Photo depicts the undercarriage of an airplane with bold white text laid on top reading, “Airbnb go home.”

Corporation Produced Texts

Samples of discourse for this section were chosen from Airbnb’s official website. The website has a sub section dedicated to people interested in turning their space- whether it’s a backyard bungalow or city side apartment- into an Airbnb. The webpages examined in this section are from the “Discovering the world of hosting” section of Airbnb.com as well as their resource center webpage.

Discourse analysis Sample 6- Discovering the world of hosting webpage from Airbnb.com.



Exploring the basics



The essentials: Get started on Airbnb

From creating your listing to prepping your space, learn how to start hosting.

3 min read



Why host on Airbnb?

Hosts reveal what they love about sharing their space on Airbnb.

3 min video



The basics of hosting on Airbnb

Anyone with space to share can become an Airbnb host—here's how to get started.

2 min read



Is my space a good fit for Airbnb?

There's a perfect guest for every space—the key is setting guest expectations.

4 min read



Unique ways to host on Airbnb

From tiny houses to treehouses, discover more about hosting unique stays.

3 min read



What does Airbnb expect of hosts?

From responding quickly to avoiding cancellations, here's what to focus on.

3 min read



How to earn money on Airbnb

Figure 9. Part one of the Discovering the world of hosting webpage from Airbnb.com. Webpage accessed March 2021.

Building confidence



How Airbnb protects hosts

Learn about Airbnb's built-in protections for hosts.

3 min read



Feeling protected by Airbnb

Here's how the Host Guarantee can give you the confidence to list your space.

2 min video



What hosting regulations apply to you?

Use this guide to navigate local rules and regulations around Airbnb hosting.

2 min read

Hosting the way you want



Control when you host

Take advantage of Airbnb's flexibility to host whenever you like.

2 min video

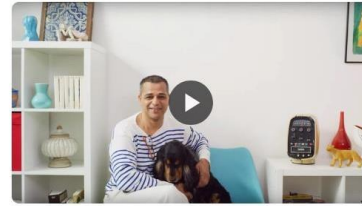
[Give feedback](#)



Tips for a simple hosting routine

Make hosting easier with tech tools, smart planning, and help from your friends.

4 min read



Your space, your rules

House Rules help set guest expectations to ensure a great experience for all.

2 min video

Figure 10. Part two of Discovering the world webpage from airbnb.com. Webpage accessed March 2021.

The top of the webpage is warm and welcoming with a drawn image of a person sipping coffee on a front porch overlooking the mountains, the sky is shades of orange. The image in the background of Figure 9 shows how Airbnb imagines their hosts' homes look, like a cozy cabin on the mountain side in a relatively small city or neighborhood, maybe even slightly secluded. Laid on top of the image is the main text of the webpage. The title, "Discovering the world of hosting" is positioned in the top left corner, underneath in smaller font is the subheading, "Learn more about the benefits of hosting, how Airbnb protects you, and how to get started."

Before discussing the individual sections, it is important to note how the images displayed as thumbnails for the articles and videos on this page are acting with the text and creating another form of multimodal discourse. All the thumbnails are bright and welcoming. Ten of the thumbnails depict smiling people of different ages and ethnicities, some are even holding objects like a guitar or pets. Thumbnails without people show beautifully decorated rooms or interesting houses that are presumably available to rent. All of the images work with the text to display a happy, successful, and most importantly protected Airbnb host or potential host experience.

Scrolling down the webpage, the first section, “Exploring the basics,” is complete with six articles and one video, all of which take under four minutes to view. The way that the videos and articles are time stamped with “2 min read” or “3 min video” gives the illusion that it only takes a total of 20 minutes or less to learn all about hosting. Comparing this illusion of efficiency presented on this webpage to the experiences of the two hosts I interviewed for this project, shows widely varying perceptions of the process to become a host. The Airbnb articles and video cover topics such how to get started on Airbnb, hosting basics, how to properly list your space and last but certainly not least to a 13-billion-dollar company, “How to earn money on Airbnb.”

The next section of the webpage is titled, “Building confidence” and includes three links to a video and two articles- all under 3 minutes to read or watch. They are titled, “How Airbnb protects hosts,” “feeling Protected by Airbnb,” and “what hosting regulations apply to you?” Two out of three of these pieces are related to the protection of the Airbnb host, because ultimately, the hosts provide the product that Airbnb sells. This pattern of concern for the host and their protection is notable because more effort is put in to assure potential hosts that they and their space will be safe, and less emphasis is put on considering the rules and regulations of your

area before hosting and on protecting neighbors. Within this section, I decided to also analyze the article about host regulations, which is elaborated more in sample 8.

The last section of the webpage is titled, “Hosting the way you want” and consists of two videos- one called “Control when you host,” and the other “Your space, your rules.” The titles and tag sentences imply that these videos are mostly for a potential host’s peace of mind- knowing that they can host whenever they like rather than making the commitment to be available as a host every night of the year. And the second video really conveys a sense of security to the host in knowing that they can set any rules (within reason?) for their space. This mindset does not align with the City’s expectations, as we saw in bullet nine of the Owners and Operators violations page, excessive noise and disrupting neighbors is not something they want to promote, however, Airbnb’s materials present the idea that if the host of the home is okay with it, then you can do it. The video is a collage of clips of hosts from all over the world (speaking different languages i.e., French) saying their house rules – some people are simple and laid back saying “Whatever goes” and others say they have, “set rules and people respect them”.

Sample 7- Airbnb’s Resource Center webpage for New Orleans, Louisiana

The screenshot shows the Airbnb Help Center interface. At the top, there's a 'Help Center' header with a search bar labeled 'Search help articles'. To the right, there are links for 'Resource Center', 'English (US)', '\$ USD', 'Sign up', and 'Log in'. Below the header, a breadcrumb trail reads 'Help Center > Hosting stays'. The left sidebar contains a list of navigation links: 'About hosting', 'Calendar and bookings', 'Payouts and taxes', 'Managing your listing', 'Your reservations', 'About Airbnb', 'Your account', 'Safety and accessibility', 'Responsible hosting', and 'Terms and policies'. The main content area is titled 'New Orleans, LA' and contains three sections: a general introduction about understanding local laws, a 'Permit updates' section stating that the deadline for permits has been extended, and a 'Short-term rental regulations' section explaining the requirements for hosts, including obtaining a license and displaying it on their listing page.

Help Center Search help articles Resource Center English (US) \$ USD Sign up Log in

Help Center > Hosting stays

About hosting
Calendar and bookings
Payouts and taxes
Managing your listing
Your reservations
About Airbnb
Your account
Safety and accessibility
Responsible hosting
Terms and policies

New Orleans, LA

When deciding whether to become an Airbnb host, it's important for you to understand the laws in your city. As a platform and marketplace we do not provide legal advice, but we want to provide some useful links that may help you better understand laws and regulations in New Orleans. This list is not exhaustive, but it should give you a good start in understanding your local laws. If you have questions, contact the [Short Term Rental Administration](#) or other city agencies directly, or consult a local lawyer or tax professional.

Permit updates

The deadline to obtain an owner and operator permit for listings has been extended.

New Orleans' short-term rental permit registration website ([onestop.nola.gov](#)) is currently not accepting short-term rental applications. To apply for your short-term rental owner and operator permits, [download the application forms](#), then email your completed form to str@nola.gov.

Short-term rental regulations

Anyone who hosts short-term stays (less than 30 consecutive nights at a time) is required to obtain an owner and operator short-term rental license and display their license numbers on their listing page.

Registration requirements

First, find out which license type your listing is eligible for using the guide below. Then, you can register on the [city's website](#).

I rent my primary residence: If your listing is in a residential zone, you're the property owner, and you have a valid homestead exemption, you may be eligible for an RSTR license. There are 3 different types of RSTR permits: [RSTR-Partial](#), [RSTR-Small](#), [RSTR-Large](#). The type you're eligible for depends on how many units and how many rooms you want to rent out.

I rent my secondary residence (a vacation rental or second home): If your listing is not in a residential zone, you're eligible for a [CSTR](#) license.

I'm a tenant or renter: If you get written permission from the property owner or your landlord and your listing is not in a residential zone, you're eligible for a [CSTR](#) license.

My listing is in the French Quarter: If your listing is on Bourbon Street, you're eligible for a [CSTR](#) license.

I want to list a STR in the Garden District: From December 1, 2019, STR listings are banned in the Garden District.

My listing is in a commercial or mixed use zone: You're eligible for a [CSTR](#) license.

I don't have a homestead exemption: A homestead exemption is legal proof that you own your primary residence. The city should have your exemption on file for your property address. If the city has no record of your homestead, you're only eligible for a [CSTR](#) license.

I want to list multiple dwelling units (ex: multiple apartments in the same apartment building): If your listing is in a residential zone, you're eligible for the [RSTR-Large](#) license. If your listing is in a commercial zone, you're eligible for the [CSTR](#) license.

Figure 11- Airbnb's webpage for New Orleans, Louisiana's requirements for registering an STR as an Airbnb. Accessed March 2021.

The way that Airbnb breaks down STR registrations requirements for New Orleans is very straightforward and uses simpler language than does the nola.gov website. Here the rules and regulations read as more applicable by being in the first and second person. By formatting the regulations like a FAQ section, in a statement/response type of format, it is simple to understand what permit is expected from you as a STR host in New Orleans. The tricky part is when the webpage links you the City of New Orleans website where you download the proper application forms and file for a permit with the city.

Sample 8- What hosting regulations apply to you?

What hosting regulations apply to you?

Use this guide to navigate local rules and regulations around Airbnb hosting.

By Airbnb on Oct 23, 2020 · 2 min read
Updated Oct 23, 2020



Deciding to become a host is an important decision, which is why Airbnb wants to help you understand the laws in your area and help clarify guidelines on permits and taxes.

Because these laws can sometimes be confusing, we partner with local governments to help them better understand the benefits hosting can bring to their communities. We also advocate for favorable home-sharing laws at all levels of government to help protect the future of your hosting business.

What local rules and regulations apply to you?

How does your local government regulate short-term rentals? What taxes do Airbnb hosts in your area need to pay, and who calculates and collects them? Does your HOA board allow Airbnb guests in the building?

Depending on where in the world you live, there can be requirements at the country, state, city, and even property level. For instance, some areas require that Airbnb hosts register or acquire a license, and insurance or safety certifications might also be required. Some cities require hosts to pay specific taxes on their Airbnb income, while others have laws that restrict short-term rentals. Local governments can vary greatly in how they enforce these laws, but penalties may include fines.

Learn about Airbnb's City Portal

To continue to grow local partnerships and support healthy tourism, we launched City Portal, a first-of-its-kind resource to help governments. [City Portal](#) provides relevant insights related to Airbnb activity, tools to help serve local communities, and access to resources and support.

This resource is an important next step in strengthening our relationships with communities, with the goal of ultimately protecting the future of home sharing for hosts and guests on Airbnb.

Start hosting responsibly

Before you can start welcoming guests into your place, the first step is to make sure your listing complies with local regulations, permit requirements, and tax agreements. By looking into which local rules and regulations apply to you, you're one step closer to earning money and hosting responsibly.

[Learn more about responsible hosting](#)

✦ Highlights

- Airbnb helps hosts understand local regulations and partners with governments to provide resources and support
- Read about safety and permits on the [responsible hosting](#) page
- Connect with your local [host club](#) for insights on regulatory requirements
- Search the [Community Center](#) for advice from hosts

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Figure 12. Airbnb's "What hosting regulations apply to you?" webpage from [airbnb.com](#). Accessed March 2021.

As mentioned in the analysis for Sample 6, the last piece of discourse I examined was an article within the “Building Confidence” section of the webpage, titled, “What hosting regulations apply to you?” The subheading, “Use this guide to navigate local rules and regulations around Airbnb hosting” is reassuring and makes the process of reading and interpreting city ordinances and rules seem less intimidating.

The highlights box follows a reader down the page, so it is always in view, this kind of lingering text box that follows you as you scroll seems like something very distinct to digital fieldwork. The first bullet in the highlights box is telling the reader that Airbnb helps hosts understand their cities.’ Airbnb regulations and the second bullet brings you to a page called “Responsible Hosting.” This bullet, well down inside the website, is the first instance of discourse on the Airbnb website that feels like getting the proper permits and checking the rules and regulations around Airbnb in your area is prioritized. In fact, under the “Start hosting responsibly” subsection, Airbnb explicitly states the importance of checking your local laws and regulations before becoming a host. This then implies that simply complying with city law equates to responsible hosting, which is not the case. Until the December 2018 mandate that required all STR owners also have a homestead exemption showing they live on the property being rented out as an STR, STR operators were legally able to buy up as many houses as they could afford, and then flip them to be STRs. This practice of whole-home renting was widely considered wrong and still is as discussed by several of my interviewees in the next section. So, while these people renting out whole homes were still complying with city laws before 2018, they were by no means considered responsible or sustainable. Now in 2021, while there are fewer whole home rentals, there are still hundreds if not thousands of whole apartments or livable dwelling units that are available to rent on Airbnb, so while it may not be an entire house,

it is still an entire apartment or livable long-term unit that is being taken off the housing market when the owner decides to convert the property into an STR.

Semi Structured Interview Analysis

Feelings of Neighborhood Safety and Connectedness

New Orleans as a city has a reputation for being unsafe with high rates of crime and frequent media coverage emphasizing instances of violence in the city. It is worth noting that locally and nationally, public discourse around urban crime is often racialized. That is, people often talk about crime being committed by working class or lower income people and often involve property crimes and inter-personal conflicts. This kind of attention is rarely given to white-collar crime as it is not discursively associated with racial minorities or “inner-city” residents.

When I began this project the connection between STRs and feelings of safety had not occurred to me until after my first interview with Sarah, a teacher at a school for students with special learning needs. When discussing how STRs affected her living experience while residing in the Bywater she stated, “They [STRs] give the illusion of safety but really nobody is living in these houses for half the year.” Sarah continued to describe how walking down the street in her neighborhood would feel unsafe during the slow parts of tourist season because of the scarcity of people and neighbors. For Sarah, the lack of neighbors equates to the lack of community and people looking out for each other. Another participant, Clarice, expressed a similar concern about safety in the Bywater due to STRs, “I feel way less safe in the Bywater than I did 10 years ago. People know that there are tourists walking around with money on them, so people get targeted in the Bywater. So now you have to be more vigilant because I do think it’s more dangerous.” Clarice’s concern here is focused on the fact because of the abundance of STRs in the area, there are numerous tourists walking around the Bywater, this then turns the

neighborhood into a hunting ground for individuals with the intent to commit property theft or other petty crimes.

While several participants talked about the different ways feelings of safety in their neighborhoods were affected by the presence of STRs, Linda, a small museum employee, focused more on the ways STRs break up communal ties that are formed between people living in proximity. As someone who smokes cigarettes, Linda spends a lot of time outside on her front porch and prides herself on getting to know her neighbors, their dogs, their kids, and their schedules. Being a long-term resident of the city and having lived in multiple neighborhoods, Linda discussed how STRs changed the sense of community that comes with living in a neighborhood for a long time. When discussing her time in the Bywater and how she felt STRs were affecting her sense of community and safety she stated, “Anytime you’re gutting a neighborhood; you’re taking out potential watch keepers, potential community and people in your circle that you can depend on. And when you don’t have that... it takes out people looking out for you.” So, while Linda does make the connection between STRs and a lack of feeling safe, she also sees how they affect social networks and the availability of people a resident can depend on to do things like water your plants while one is away or to accept a package for you. Having a friendly relationship with your neighbors is valuable. For many black, lower income people in New Orleans neighbors are much more than people who simply live on the same block as you. This type of loss goes beyond the loss of shelter and extends to the loss of social networks and place-based knowledge.

STRs and the Cost of Renting and Buying a Home

As of 2019, the average monthly rent in New Orleans was \$1,570. This means the cost of the average one-bedroom apartment in the city has increased roughly \$600 prior to ten years ago when the average rent for a one bedroom was \$926 (RentJungle.com). When doing research to see why the cost of rent and the price to buy a house has increased so much over the past ten years, most realty websites attribute the increasing trends to inflation, demand, and availability of houses- which suggests that the rise in housing costs is somehow inevitable or a natural result of the “market” rather than policy (Redfin.com). However, when discussing how STRs have affected residents of the city, interviewees attributed the rise to STRs. Clarice described her experience apartment rentals when she first moved to the city ten years ago as being fair and affordable; stating that if a landlord was charging more than a dollar per square foot, you were essentially being taken advantage of as a tenant. Today, that scale is laughable. In 2020, the average monthly rent for an apartment was \$1,166 and the average square footage of an apartment was 843 square feet (RentCafe.com). These numbers vary depending on amenities, location, number of bedrooms, etc. But if we just look at these numbers alone, we see how \$1.00 per square foot is no longer an accurate scale to describe the rent pricing in New Orleans. A simple search to compare the rental prices within neighborhoods like the Marigny, Bywater, Treme, and Mid City shows that a more accurate and current scale for price per square foot in a New Orleans apartment is closer to \$1.40 (Zillow.com, RentCafe.com). The average one-bedroom apartment in New Orleans is roughly 893 square feet. So if we apply the new rate per foot to the equation, an 893 square foot home will cost at least \$1,250, whereas according to Clarice, the same place would have cost much closer to \$900 per month, a \$350 difference (Rentcafe.com).

According to the New Orleans Metropolitan Association of Realtors (NOMAR), the average sales price for houses in New Orleans has continuously increased since 2008 when the average price of houses was around \$150,000-200,000. Now, in 2020, the average price hovers much closer to \$300,000 or more. Sarah also expressed similar struggles to Clarice regarding finding an affordable home. Sarah and her partner are both teachers in Orleans Parish, and recently bought a home in the St. Roch neighborhood. St. Roch is a popular downtown area with lots of small restaurants and shops. It is also relatively close to the French Quarter and Frenchmen Street. Sarah explained that the only reason she and her partner were able to afford a house in the area was because of her partner's recently obtained inheritance. Of course, not everyone is fortunate enough to have a wealthy partner or an inheritance. When discussing wealth and the ability to use your wealth to purchase a home, race is vital to consider because of the history of inequality and discrimination Black people have faced historically within the real estate and home-owning world (Conley 2009). However, Sarah is one of many homeowners who I have made small talk with who express similar stories of privilege as being the reason why they can afford to own a home in New Orleans.

Pushing People Out

As mentioned earlier, in 2018 Jane Place Neighborhood Sustainability Initiative released a report highlighting how STRs accelerated gentrification and the displacement of residents (DeDecker, 2018). Several of the interviewees for this project confirmed Jane Place's findings with their own firsthand experiences of being kicked out of previous apartments because they were being turned into STRs. One contributor, Clarice explained, "It's just going to be that situation again where the people that work here, the people that serve your drinks, the people that perform for you are not going to be able to afford to live here.... It's just pushing people further

and further out.” This idea of STRs pushing people further out brings up the question that Sarah alluded to in her interview when she said, “It becomes a game of who actually gets the housing and who gets to stay here.”

James, who is an urban planner and has worked on issues related to STRs for over five years, also spoke on the issue of people being pushed out of the city, “New Orleans is a unique place because it’s not just a land use issue- it’s an existential issue. New Orleans is food and music and culture- and where are the chefs and the horn players and the people going to live?” James then continued to place this issue into a larger national context when he compared this phenomenon to the experience of native Hawaiian people, “The only other people that I have talked to that see it as an assault on people is Hawaii—Hawaiian people speak like that—especially the more activist types will frame it as a second type of colonialism.”

In Hawai’i, like in New Orleans, tourism is a complex industry whose tentacles reach into practically every crevice of human existence. For Hawai’i, this invasion looks the same as New Orleans with constantly rising costs of a single-family home and the displacement of long-term residents and natives. Hawaiians have been very vocal about their frustrations with land destruction, cultural exploitation, large land developers, and the rising number of tourists moving to the Hawaiian Islands. Originally a Polynesian island, Hawai’i was colonized by the US in the 20th century. Today, the overwhelming number of people looking to move to the islands is seen as a second wave of colonialism as native Hawaiians are outnumbered by tourists six to one (Kay, 2000).

James’ concern about where the ‘chefs and the horn players’ are going to live if STRs continue to take away long term renting options is a common narrative used by people

expressing issues with Airbnb and gives insight into how the housing crisis, amplified by the presence of STRs and now the Covid pandemic, affects culture bearers. The chefs and musicians in New Orleans are the people who make the city memorable and a number one tourist destination, but they are the ones who profit the least as the gig economy is at its best inconsistent (Sakakeeny, 2013). Therefore, the lack of affordable housing in New Orleans is disproportionately impacting working class or lower-income people and many African Americans who produce, sustain, and transmit some of the city's most prized cultural practices, from music to visual art, cuisine, parades, and festivals (Regis & Walton, 2008).

Hosting on Airbnb

In doing this research I was able to get in to contact with and hold formal semi structured interviews with two people who both host properties on Airbnb and are both licensed and registered with New Orleans. I also spoke with another Airbnb host while conducting fieldwork in the Bywater neighborhood, but this conversation was not recorded and transcribed. Extensive notes were taken on the conversation and some of their input is discussed in relation to how hosts view the STR industry in New Orleans. While speaking with these three people gave me some very valuable insight on the ways STR hosts interpret the regulations and issues around STRs, only speaking with three hosts was a limitation of this research and a more extensive documentation of hosts' perspectives and experiences should be the subject of future research.

I reached out to the first host I talked with via the STR permit that was displayed in her home window. These permits are required for all STR operators to display in rental units, so they are visible from the street. On the permit a name, email, and phone number of the STR operator is provided. I got my first interviewee's info from a permit like this and sent an email explaining

my project and asking if the owner would be open to an interview. After a few emails back and forth, Carol and I set a date for an interview. The other interviewee who was also a host was reached out through a Facebook post I made on a group Facebook page dedicated to Airbnb hosts in New Orleans. The post was very vague, stating I was doing a research project on STRs and Airbnb's in New Orleans and I was looking for hosts to interview. A few people commented but one woman, Hannah, reached out in my direct messages and we set up a date for a formal interview. Other than a few specifics about numbers of listings and personal experience with hosting, the questions asked during interviews were the same for both hosts and non-hosts living in New Orleans. While my interviews with hosts revealed a lot about the tensions people have with the permitting and application process of STRs and the business side of Airbnb, hosts also expressed how they see gentrification and displacement happening in New Orleans and the role they think Airbnb plays in the process.

To be considered a legally operating STR in New Orleans there are two required permits, owner and operator. Applications go through multiple individuals including a permit analyst and a member of the STR office before they can be approved for renting. An owner permit is required and can only be held by a person with a homestead exemption. The Operator permit can also be under the same name as the owner permit; however, one person can have multiple operators permits if they are managing multiple STR properties. The descriptions of the permits are as basic as the actual descriptions and requirements for each permit are much longer and have their own specific guidelines- which can be confusing to new hosts. In my interview with Carol, a middle-aged white woman who moved to New Orleans in the early 2000s; she described how difficult the process to get the proper permits had become since she started short-term renting part of her double shotgun home in 2013. Constantly wondering when she would hear back from

the STR administration office after sending multiple emails, Carol was relieved when she got a date for a meeting with someone in the office to discuss the concerns she had as host who genuinely wanted to play by the city's rules regarding STRs. Carol was shocked when she arrived at what she thought was a meeting to clarify her confusions, was a hearing that resulted in a \$5000 fine Carol had to pay for illegally renting out one side of her house. This was an event that happened five years prior. The STR office has a reputation for extremely poor communication. Hannah, my second Airbnb host with whom I spoke, reported a similar story of having a property ready to be open for short-term renters. Not being able to operate for two months because she was waiting on the STR office to get her permits together precluded her endeavor.

The frustrations that hosts deal with when they are dealing with the STR office in New Orleans is enough to make some people skip the process all together, Carol said, "my husband, he did Airbnb too for a while. He did it illegally before we met. And he just keeps telling me, 'don't do it. Just do it illegally, you're going to make more, you don't have to deal with all the harassment. They're going after the licensed people.' And I said, 'yeah but I'm already in the system.' And to me that is not how I work. I have to do things by the rules, and I want to do things right." After this statement Carol went on to explain that she believes a lot of Airbnb hosts are probably hosting illegally and do not want to admit it, which is why she thinks I had issues finding hosts to interview in the first place. This directly contradicts how Hannah describes the presence of illegal Airbnb's. Hannah claimed to not know anybody who operated illegally and that even if she did, she has never had an experience where she was asked to prove her legitimacy, directing our conversation back to the failures of the STR administration.

My interview with Hannah revealed more information about the negative experience of getting the proper STR permits, when speaking about the level of difficulty to get a permit she said, “in my experience, it's a lot of emails, a lot of phone calls, two or three phone calls a day, constant checkup, Where's my permit? Where is my permit? Nobody's going to push it through the line unless you're trying to get it pushed through the line by just being aggressive.” Hannah currently manages a property in Holy Cross that has multiple Airbnb listings. The location is important to note because Holy Cross is located on the riverside of the Lower Ninth ward, which is arguably not anywhere close to where tourists or students would want to be as it is far away from the French Quarter and most university campuses in the area. The property is a renovated fifteen bedroom and ten-bathroom house that Hannah describes as more of a hostel based on the pricing. One bedroom has multiple bunkbeds and a bed can be rented for \$20 a night. When describing the demographic of people who stay in her property- Hannah described mostly people experiencing homelessness or facing eviction, so typically lower income people who just need a place to stay for a night or two.

Hannah's insight on the difficulties of the permit process were interesting, but more importantly, she spoke about how she sees the role Airbnb plays in gentrification and displacement. As a person who moved to New Orleans and had to find affordable housing for herself, Hannah described the way she felt victim to the idea that Airbnb was the root of all her problems and the reason why she was having problems finding an affordable place to live. It was not until she herself started managing STRs that she came to a different conclusion on displacement in the city,

“The reason is because people come here from out of town who are white, either tourists- or excuse me, not tourists- students, hipsters, and cool kids that want to live in the Bywater or the Marigny and they want to live in the hip neighborhoods, and they want to

spend \$1,000 or \$1,500 a month to live in a house that used to go for \$400 or \$500 a month. In the Bywater, right now, you have less than 1000 Airbnb's. In fact, it is more like 200. You have over 11,000 people who are transplants between the ages of eighteen and twenty-eight. So, if these people were willing to not live in those neighborhoods, if they were willing to live in Gentilly, if they were willing to live in Mid City, if they were willing to live in the areas that aren't as cool, then the low-income black families that I have to preserve with section eight housing or Unity housing, just so they can stay in their neighborhoods, would still have their rentals that have always been rentals. That's my personal opinion."

In this quote, Hannah explains that Airbnbs are not the problem, but rather, white wealthy younger people who move into these "trendy," new neighborhoods are the problem because they are willing and able to pay much more in rent than some low-income families. While I did not fact check the numbers that Hannah cites, I did do a search on Airbnb.com for listings in the Bywater and found that the estimate of 200 listings in the Bywater is accurate however, the fact that there are still over 150 whole apartments/homes listed on Airbnb means that there are 150 livable dwelling units that are being used as hotel rooms rather than homes.

Hannah's outlook on living in a tourism driven city with a large STR presence centers around adaptation and getting the proper people involved to discuss reform. As Hannah stated at the end of our interview, "I believe that Airbnb is revolutionizing the way that we travel to the point that hotels are becoming extinct. And hotels are a multibillion-dollar industry. People from that industry have a lot of money to lobby, and they have a lot of money to convince folks that it's not in their best interest to let anyone who owns a home turn their home into something that they can make money off of... So, I support Airbnb in New Orleans 100%. I just wish that there were more educated people lobbying for it so that the reform works in a way to actually help the citizens instead of a way to help a rich hotel owner." For Hannah, she sees Airbnb and Uber and sharing economies as the future of travel and a way to boost local businesses by encouraging guests to visit local stores and restaurants. A similar remark was made in conversation with a

host in the Bywater who described her STR property as a part time Airbnb because she mainly uses the property (before Covid-19) to host visiting artists and musicians in the city. As a working artist herself, she told me about how listing on Airbnb helps her afford to be able to host travelling artists and musicians for free.

Responsible STRs

At the end of every interview, I asked each participant of this project the question, “What does a responsibly run STR property look like to you?” The purpose of this question was to gather a list of factors that would make an STR “ethical” or “responsible.” I then will apply this list of qualifications to current Airbnb listings to see how many would be deemed responsible by residents of the city. This method was formed to include a more collaborative element of this project where I, the researcher, am not simply making a list of qualifications I see as required for an STR to be operating responsibly, but a list made up of the qualifications determined by long-term, full-time residents of the city (Lassiter, 2008).

While the details of the answers ranged, one common trend among interviewees was the unethicallness of whole-home rentals. The only participant to describe something along the lines of an ethical whole-home rental was Clarice who suggested that if an individual did want to have a whole-home short-term rental property in the city, then they also should have to provide an affordable long-term rental unit, creating a one-to-one ratio of short and long-term rentals. Jenna, one of the two urban planners interviewed, stated that the only way an STR can be considered ethical is if it is one to one host to home ratio. This was the most mentioned attribute of a responsibly run STR as it most closely mirrors what the original business mantra was for Airbnb as a company. As James said in our interview, “If we are living up to what Airbnb says it is-

which is people renting out their homes to make a little bit of money on the side. Then let's make it that. And if you don't want to do that, you want to do something more, then that's a different thing." In other words, James is suggesting that if people want to run a multiple room STR property, we need to be calling them a bed and breakfast or an inn and having them register as such.

Social Media Posts

As mentioned in the Methodology chapter, this set of data is weighted the least and is used to provide further representation of how New Orleans residents process and ultimately resist the presence of Airbnb and STRs in their neighborhoods. For this project, I collected over thirty posts all relating to STRs in some capacity. The three posts discussed in this section were chosen to represent the data collected because the posts relating to STRs I found were majority Anti-Airbnb. These posts were all created by New Orleans residents or community organizations.

The first image was taken by local photographer, Bruce Williams (@bqwphotography). Located in the 5th ward of New Orleans, the photo depicts a property that appears to be unoccupied; the siding is worn and loose, native plants like cats' claw are crawling up the exterior walls, and graffiti is all over the house (Figure 13). The largest piece of graffiti is the phrase, "Airbnb did 9-11." There is a layer of irony with this graffiti as Airbnb was not even a company yet when the events that took place on September 11th happened. After 9/11, a series of memes became popular online where people would play with the conspiracy theory that, "Bush did 9/11" by replacing "Bush" with various fictional characters, celebrities, and, in this photo's case, corporations. In this example, the artist is blaming Airbnb for 9/11. While Airbnb obviously had nothing to do with the 9/11 attacks, this graffiti is especially interesting when we think about how often humor is used to process trauma. The displacement of folks from their homes due to gentrification and the presence of STRs can be traumatic for those who have to give up all their place-based knowledge and local support networks when they move. While the maker of this piece is unknown, it inspires questions around what being forced to move means for some people.

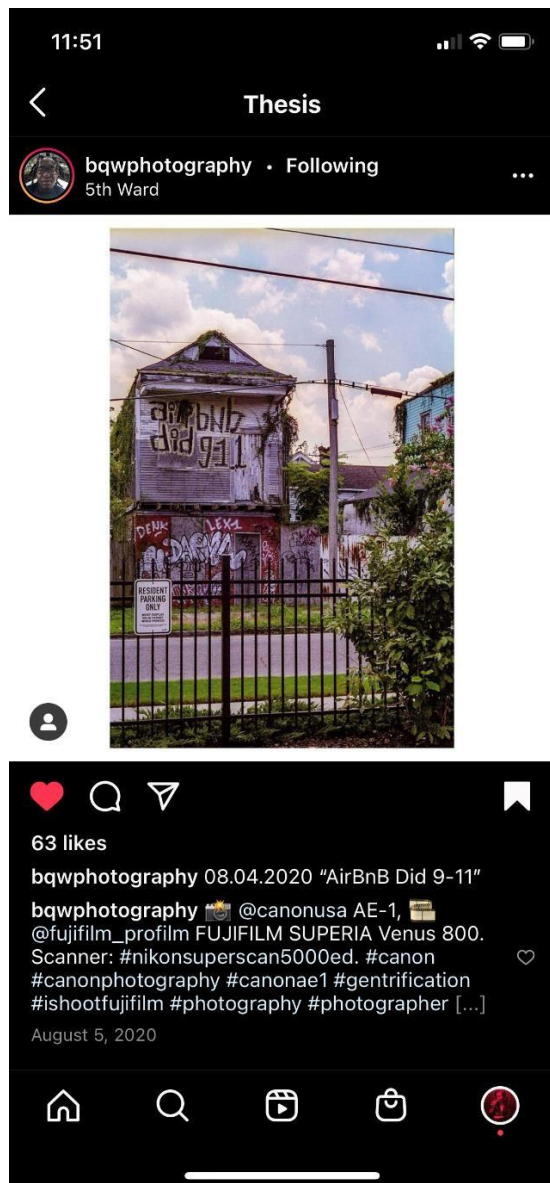


Figure 13. Screenshot of Instagram user @bqwphotography's post of a dilapidated house. Graffiti reads, "Airbnb did 9-11" Posted August 5, 2020.

The second post (figure 14) was created by an organization I have continually referenced in this thesis, Jane Place Neighborhood Sustainability Initiative. The post depicts signs that were created to be shown at a 2019 City Council meeting where a vote was to take place on Short-term rentals. The signs are not all specifically anti-Airbnb, as one is simply for defending renter's rights. The "Evict Airbnb" sign is significant because it emphasizes the fact that while people are upset with the presence of STRs in general, they are specifically upset with the

platform Airbnb as it is the largest, most lucrative platform, as well as being the platform that made short-term renting popular. The “One to One match” sign is also significant because it confirms what several of my interviewees described when they were asked what a responsible STR owner or operator looks like, a one-to-one match of STRs and affordable housing units.

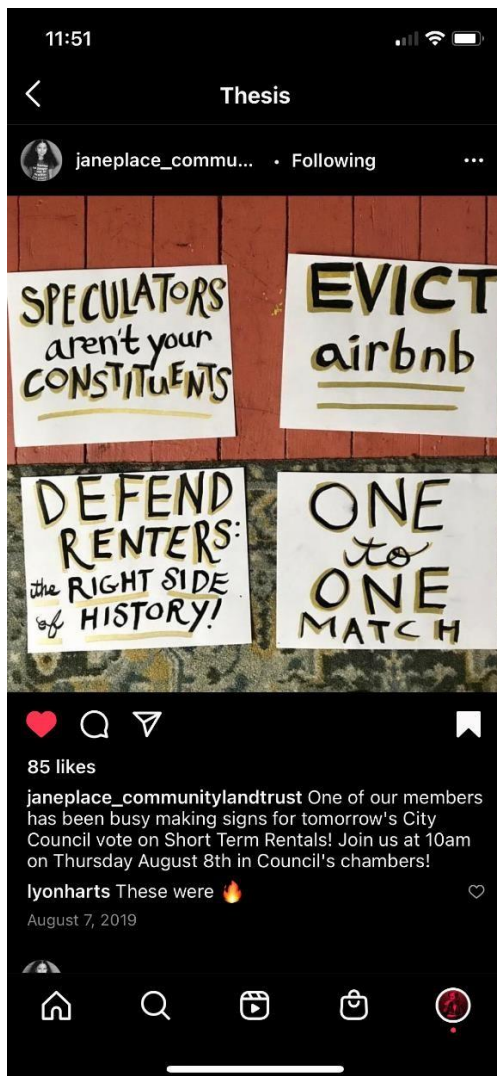


Figure 14. Screenshot of Instagram user @janeplace_communitylandtrust’s post of four signs made to be displayed by people attending a 2019 City Council vote on STR regulations. Posted August 7, 2019.

The last post I want to bring attention to is the hand knitted sign by the artist @pottspurls on Instagram. The artist creates hand knitted signs and art and photographs them around the city.

The phrase, “Airbnb killed New Orleans and all we got were these drunk tourists,” is a play on tourist t-shirts commonly seen in tourist cities. These shirts usually say something along the lines of, “My relative went to the French Quarter and all I got was this dumb t-shirt.” By switching out a few key words and phrases, the silly tourist-centric slogan is turned into a thought-provoking piece that makes the connection between Airbnb affecting (or in this case, killing) New Orleans and the tourism industry. The other reason I wanted to discuss this post is because of the amount of people who interacted with the post via liking and commenting. Almost 700 users liked the post about it and currently it has almost forty comments. While this may or may not be the average amount of interaction this user experiences when they post, the fact that 700 people liked the post suggests significant support or agreement with the statement the artist is trying to get across, which she makes explicit in her caption for the post that reads,

“Gentrification is rapidly changing the face of New Orleans. Airbnb, while not the only contributor, has undeniably played a large role in the displacement of native New Orleanians. While blocks have been turned into short-term rentals in some neighborhoods. Historic neighborhoods have been the hardest hit. City Council recently voted to limit short-term rentals, but it just isn’t enough. Affordable housing needs to be made a priority. New Orleans has always been a tourist destination. But putting visitors ahead of locals has a cost. If we let Airbnb kill New Orleans, the food, the music, and culture- that doesn’t exist anywhere else- go with it. Are the tourists still going to come when New Orleans is just like Anywhere, USA? **Airbnb fueled gentrification is not just an issue for New Orleans. It’s ravaging cities worldwide...just something to consider when booking your next trip.”

In their caption @pottspurls attributes gentrification in part to the presence of STRs in historic district neighborhoods. Ending their caption with the encouragement to consider the issues STRs cause when booking your next trip to a tourist destination aligns with my discussion on the importance of educating people on sustainable and responsible tourism.



Figure 15. Screenshot of Instagram user @pottspurls's post of hand knitted framed sign that reads, "Airbnb killed New Orleans and all we got were these drunk tourists. Posted November 5, 2019.

Discussion

Doing this research yielded roughly nine hours of recorded interviews, over one hundred pages of transcript, thirty pages of discourse analysis, and a collection of over forty posts from social media related to STRs. In analyzing all my data collected for this project, the most prevalent theme that was present in discourse analysis, interviews, and on social media, was the concern around safety. In texts produced by New Orleans City council, security and safety are briefly mentioned in terms of owner and operator violations when the city outlines that STRs breaking safety violations will be subject to penalization or a fine. The website does not make it clear what STR safety violations the City is concerned about, so determining whether their concern is focused on protecting STR owners, STR guests, or the neighbors of the STR, is unclear.

Looking at Airbnb's webpage, safety and security are thoroughly addressed with multiple articles and videos created to convince a potential host that they will be safe, and their property will be safe too. The webpage almost reads and feels like one big advertisement for people who have thought about hosting but are unsure about it because they assume it's dangerous or not financially worth it. Airbnb skillfully crafted the ultimate user-friendly, visually appealing, anxiety-soothing webpage to convince a potential host that Airbnb will protect them, protect their property, and lastly, make them money.

In my interviews, safety and protection were talked about almost exclusively within terms of residents in the city not feeling safe in areas of neighborhoods with multiple STRs. Interviewees described feeling less safe in densely populated STR neighborhoods because so many of the

houses in the area were empty for half the year, which they equated to fewer people looking out for them if something were to happen.

Participants' descriptions of how the presence of STRs influenced their feelings of safety are significant because while they spoke of feeling less safe, they also spoke of feeling less connected to their neighborhoods, using affective language to describe how their sense of place in their own neighborhoods had shifted with the presence of STRs. This sensory connection to the atmosphere of a neighborhood and the ability to *feel* the transformation as my interviewees described can be described as a kind of "atmospheric attunement," that can only be obtained by a person who is immersed in the everyday life of a neighborhood, a city or other worldly atmosphere (Stewart, 2011).

Conclusion

In this thesis I have examined the ways New Orleans residents and STR hosts experience their changing neighborhoods as STR properties remain in neighborhoods such as the Bywater, Marigny, and Mid-City. I have also explored the ways texts produced from places of power (like the City Council or a large corporation) influence and project their own values through public discourse. This project also highlights the unique ways artists and other creators around the city use social media to share their forms of protest and resistance to the presence of short-term rentals in their neighborhoods. This thesis contributes to the literature on sustainable tourism by investigating the concerns that city residents and STR hosts have in relation to each other, the city's STR administration, and the platform Airbnb.

These findings are significant because the New Orleans traditions that the tourism board loves to advertise on billboards in the city or in the newly renovated MSY airport, are highly tied to a sense of place and land-based knowledge. Beautiful photos of second line parades and Mardi Gras Indians paired with the promise of stellar one-of-a-kind cuisines, bring millions of tourists into the city every year. The people that practice these traditions that the tourism board sells are also the people most likely to be affected and displaced when landlords and apartment complex developers choose to rent their fully livable units on the short-term rental market. This process of pushing people out then has much larger implications for the tourism industry if what they are selling is not there because they had to move to cheaper surrounding areas like the Westbank, Kenner, LaPlace, or New Orleans East.

Based on the data collected, I have come to realize that the issues people have with STRs in their neighborhoods are much more personal than I had understood previously. Before doing

this research, when thinking about different ways people feel about STRs in their neighborhoods, I had grouped people into two categories; people who cared enough to actively report STRs they think are illegal, and people who still do not like them, but do not actively go out their way to report or fight against them. After interviewing multiple people with different levels of experience with STRs, ranging from people who have never had any direct experience staying in an Airbnb, to urban planners who work in STR ordinance writing, as well as critically analyzing the texts around STR presence in New Orleans, I have come to see how people see their presence as much more than just another sharing economy business such as Uber. People see these units as an attack on the culture of New Orleans, as they are a visible house-sized reminder that gentrification and displacement are happening in their neighborhoods. This makes it difficult to find a middle ground where everyday neighborhood residents and people who want to host on platforms like Airbnb, to agree on the best way of regulating them, but they do all agree that regulations are necessary as these types of businesses are not going away.

The main limitation of this study was having to conduct fieldwork during a global pandemic. While I was able to complete the thesis, I had to shift the focus of this project on critical discourse analysis and hold all interviews virtually. While the process of doing critical discourse, analysis was not limited by the pandemic, virtual interviews with participants was a limitation for my project. As discussed in the Methodology chapter, a layer of trust and rapport is lost when a researcher is forced to do interviews virtually. The other limitation related to the pandemic was small the number of participants with whom I was able to get in contact to set up interviews. While I believe the sample of five New Orleans resident interviews paired with discourse analysis of community produced texts and social media posts were efficient in

displaying the feelings residents have toward STRs, this study would have benefitted from more perspectives from a larger variety of hosts.

Going forward, I have a lot of questions about the ways discourse has unconscious influence on readers, especially when they are produced by institutions of relatively greater power. As mentioned before, the city of New Orleans has a fifty-eight-page STR handbook that supposedly details everything STR operators and owners need to know about operating in New Orleans. I think that critical discourse analysis on the handbook as well as focusing on specific sections of the handbook, would give a more complete picture of the ways the city of New Orleans negotiates power and responsibility in discourse. A more complete discourse analysis of the webpages that Airbnb.com produce would also be an area for future research as the website contains several links to embedded webpages that focus on different aspects of hosting. Another possible future research project that would build on this thesis and pull from more applied anthropology sources, would be a project focused on creating sustainable tourism guides for cities struggling with tourism fueled problems. The guides would be locally created and geared toward travelers and tourists to help educate people on ways they can travel sustainably and how not participate in practices that are harmful to host cities.

Appendix A. IRB Approval Form and Participant Consent Form

ACTION ON EXEMPTION APPROVAL REQUEST



TO: Madeline Fussell
Geography and Anthropology

FROM: Dennis Landin
Chair, Institutional Review Board

DATE: March 12, 2020

RE: IRB# E12127

TITLE: Airbnb and Short Term Rentals in New Orleans, Louisiana

Institutional Review Board
Dr. Dennis Landin, Chair
130 David Boyd Hall
Baton Rouge, LA 70803
P: 225.578.8692
F: 225.578.5983
irb@lsu.edu
lsu.edu/research

New Protocol/Modification/Continuation: New Protocol

Review Date: 3/10/2020

Approved X **Disapproved** _____

Approval Date: 3/10/2020 **Approval Expiration Date:** 3/9/2023

Exemption Category/Paragraph: 2c

Signed Consent Waived?: No

Re-review frequency: Three Years

LSU Proposal Number (if applicable):

By: Dennis Landin, Chairman 

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING – Continuing approval is CONDITIONAL on:

1. Adherence to the approved protocol, familiarity with, and adherence to the ethical standards of the Belmont Report, and LSU's Assurance of Compliance with DHHS regulations for the protection of human subjects*
2. Prior approval of a change in protocol, including revision of the consent documents or an increase in the number of subjects over that approved.
3. Obtaining renewed approval (or submittal of a termination report), prior to the approval expiration date, upon request by the IRB office (irrespective of when the project actually begins); notification of project termination.
4. Retention of documentation of informed consent and study records for at least 3 years after the study ends.
5. Continuing attention to the physical and psychological well-being and informed consent of the individual participants, including notification of new information that might affect consent.
6. A prompt report to the IRB of any adverse event affecting a participant potentially arising from the study.
7. Notification of the IRB of a serious compliance failure.
8. **SPECIAL NOTE: When emailing more than one recipient, make sure you use bcc. Approvals will automatically be closed by the IRB on the expiration date unless the PI requests a continuation.**

* All investigators and support staff have access to copies of the Belmont Report, LSU's Assurance with DHHS, DHHS (45 CFR 46) and FDA regulations governing use of human subjects, and other relevant documents in print in this office or on our World Wide Web site at <http://www.lsu.edu/irb>

Participant Consent Form

Consent Form for STR study interviewees

1. Study Title: Airbnb and Short-Term Rentals in New Orleans Louisiana

2. This project aims to better understand the effects of short-term rental properties, like Airbnb and HomeAway, have on communities and housing availability in neighborhoods in New Orleans, Louisiana. No sensitive information will be collected, and the interview will be recorded. You, the research participant can have the recorder paused or turned off completely at any time during the interview.

3. Inclusion criteria: Research participants must be 18 years of age and use STRs as either hosts or guests, or live in New Orleans and want to share their experience with living near an STR property.

4. Exclusion criteria: Being under the age of 18 will exclude participants.

5. There are no risks involved with participating in this study as no personal information will be recorded and all names will be made anonymous.

6. Investigators: The primary investigators for this project, Dr. Helen Regis or Maddie Fussell, have provided me with their contact information as well as when I can contact them with any questions, I have concerning this process.

7. Subjects may choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or loss of any benefit to which they might otherwise be entitled.

8. Participants interviews and information will be stored on a password protected hard drive that will be stored securely with the primary investigators.

9. This study has been approved by the LSU IRB. For questions concerning participant rights, please contact the IRB Chair, Alex Cohen, 578-8692, or irb@lsu.edu."

10. By continuing this survey or questionnaire, you are giving consent to participate in this study.

11. Your information or biospecimens collected as part of the research, even if identifiers are removed, may be used or distributed for future research.

_____ Yes, I, _____(Name)_____, give permission

_____ No, I do not give permission

Appendix B. Discourse Transcripts

Transcripts only depict the words and sentences that appear on the webpages and newspapers they are from, they do not reflect the formatting, spacing, font colors or changes in font style or size.

Sample 1: Transcript of the Introduction to STRs page on Nola.gov

City of New Orleans

Mayor LaToya Cantrell

Short Term Rentals [Italics]

Like the rules regarding many other types of business, the rules regarding the business of STR can be complicated. In addition to a basic understanding of the fundamentals, it is essential for anyone engaged in the business of STR to keep their knowledge base up to date. The STR Office is dedicated to providing complete informational materials to the public and, as a part of the OneStop, provides individuals the opportunity to discuss specific questions and issues in person with a member of our team.

The STR permitting process can involve all the various elements of property use including tax, licensing, and permit history, zoning restrictions, and code compliance. The deep and unique history of New Orleans has traditionally made accurate record-keeping a challenge and it is not unusual for the licensing process to reveal unanswered questions about a property. The City's interest is in ensuring the public's questions are fully answered, and your patience is appreciated for any specific and/or detailed inquiries.

This website is intended to serve as a primer for those who are new to the business of STR and as a compliance guide for STR permit holders. This website is for informational use - the enabling legislation which regulates STR in the City is the ultimate authority. STR permit holders and applicants are expected to know and understand the current rules and requirements of the business at the time they apply for an STR permit.

The complete enabling legislation can be found at the links below.

MUNICIPAL CODE OF NEW ORLEANS (CCNO)

Access the complete CCNO at library.municode.com/la/new_orleans. Within the CCNO are other important regulations regarding building and property construction, use, and maintenance, as well as fire safety, accessibility requirements, and more. The STR-specific revisions to the Municipal Code of New Orleans may be found at Ordinance No. 28157 MCS.

COMPREHENSIVE ZONING ORDINANCE (CZO)

Access the complete CZO at czo.nola.gov/home/. The CZO also contains important regulations regarding historic preservation, property use, parking requirements, and more. The STR-specific revisions to the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance for the City of New Orleans may be found at Ordinance No. 28156 MCS

Sample 2- Transcript of the “Applying for an STR” Webpage on the Nola.gov website

The review process for STR permits can be complex. The deep history and unique architecture of New Orleans means that one formula rarely fits all. The staff and Office of the OneStop Shop and the STR Office endeavor to complete all reviews within two weeks of filing. As our offices and the public gain more experience with the new regulations and processes involved, our goal is to be able to provide same-day issuance of any permit or permit which does not require an inter-departmental review.

STEP 1: FILING AN APPLICATION

Applications can be filed online at onestopapp.nola.gov or in person at the OneStop Shop on the 7th floor of City Hall, 1300 Perdido St. If you file online, you will receive a confirmation email when your application is successfully filed. If you do not receive a confirmation email, it means that your application has not been filed.

The date that the application is registered in our system as successfully filed is the filing date of that application. In the interest of ensuring that all applications are received with an accurate filing date, we will not be able to accept applications that are dropped off, emailed, faxed, or sent by mail.

STEP 2: APPLICATION REVIEW

When filed, each application is assigned to a permit analyst who will review the application for eligibility and completeness. When the analyst completes their review, the application is assigned to a member of the STR Office, who will confirm the analyst’s review before approving a final determination. We ask for two weeks to complete this review process. To check the progress of an application review, visit onestopapp.nola.gov and use the search bar at the top of the page to search by reference code, permit number, applicant name, or property address. During this process we will communicate with applicants from a "do not reply" email address. Applicants whose applications require additional documentation or action will be given detailed instructions. To ensure you receive these important emails, please whitelist or regularly check your spam/junk folders for emails from NOREPLY@nola.gov. Every email will include the direct email address of the reviewer who sent it so be sure to direct replies to that reviewer’s email and not to the "do not reply" address.

STEP 3: DETERMINATION

All determinations on STR applications will be emailed from NOREPLY@nola.gov. Application approvals will contain instructions on payment and downloading the permit placard. Application denials will provide reasons for the denial and instructions on how to appeal the denial and/or re-apply. Determinations may be appealed through the Board of Zoning Adjustments within 45

days. More information about this process can be found at nola.gov/city-planning/applications or by visiting the CPC at the OneStop.

Sample 3- Transcript of the “Owner and Operator Violations” webpage on Nola.gov

A complete list of violations associated with STR ownership can be found at CCNO Sec. 26-618(B). [\[Hyper Link\]](#)

A complete list of violations associated with STR operation can be found CCNO Sec. 26-620(B). [\[HYPER LINK\]](#)

STR Owners and STR Operators must not engage in or allow conduct which results in:

- Advertising an illegal or unpermitted STR;

- Advertising more STR Units on a lot than is legally permitted;
- Advertising or providing more Guest Bedrooms than allowed the STR permit;
- Advertising for or allowing a higher Guest occupancy than allowed by the STR permit;
- Exceeding the limits on the number of STR Units per lot;
- Allowing the use of an STR as an event venue or other commercial use during a STR stay;
- Advertising or allowing the use of an STR by the hour or for less than one night;
- Renting of an STR Unit to more than one Party of Guests at a time;
- STR use which generates excessive loud sound, offensive odors, public drunkenness, unlawful loitering, lewd conduct by guests or any effect that otherwise unreasonably interferes with neighbors' quiet enjoyment of their properties;
- STR use which places loads on structural elements of the building in excess of those allowed by the Building Code;
- Violation of a Noise Abatement, Security, Operations, or Sanitation Plans (if applicable);
- Discrimination against any Guest or potential Guest because of race, color, sex, gender identity, age, religion, disability, national origin, ancestry, sexual orientation, marital status, parental status, military discharge status, or source of income;
- Failure to comply with the CCNO, CZO, or any other federal, state, or local law.

Sample 4- Dear Tourist flyer transcript

Line 1: Dear Tourist, Welcome to

2: NOLA!!!!

3: We know you gonna have a

4: JAZZY and FONKY time!!!!

5: It's magical here! The music

6: bubbles up from the streets!!!!

7: This beautiful neighborhood on high

8: ground and its residents survived

9: Hurricane Katrina nearly intact!!!

10: Are you staying in an illegal short term

11: rental listed on AIRBNB or VRBO?

12: If so, then

13: YOU

14: are directly responsible for displacing

15: the last remaining long-time

16: neighborhood residents that are

17: survivors of one of the

18: largest disasters

19: that's ever happened in America

20: by creating a market for illegal short

21: term rentals in this residential area

22: and THAT, dear tourist, is a

23: GODDAMN SHAME

24: Enjoy your stay in our former homes, Y'all!!

Sample 5- The Shotgun article transcript

Crisis of Dispossession

How White Capital and Policy Has Intensified Housing Precarity Post Katrina

The Liquidations Committee

In 2019 there seems to be no end in sight to the movement of unhinged capital into New Orleans real estate. While every city struggles with the racialized displacement of poor people and precarious renters due to outside development, the legacy of redlining, Hurricane Katrina, and the predatory re-development of the city in its wake have led to a crisis of displacement, eviction and whitening of New Orleans. City and State housing policies (and lack thereof) have led to the complete commodification of housing- one which favors landlords. Speculator investment and backdoor subsidizing of lucrative subleasing schemes. And finally, with the additional element of Airbnb and whole short-term rentals (STR's) being introduced in the last half decade, this process has truly gone off the rails. But this is not going unopposed; many are working to expose the eviction crises, close of Airbnb futures and strategize on how to crash the housing bubble. Additionally, there are ways anyone can participate in the fight to take back homes and land from the market and return them to people.

As anyone paying attention to rental prices, the frequency of remodeling projects and the number of new Airbnbs around their houses can attest to, the displacement of black New Orleanians from their neighborhoods continues to rapidly accelerate. The redevelopment of New Orleans after Katrina and the city's recent gentrification are largely simultaneous and symbiotic projects. A recent report from the Jane Place Neighborhood Sustainability Initiative (JPNSI), a land trust and housing rights advocacy group, and Davida Finger, a professor at Loyola University College of Law, used data from eviction causes in New Orleans between January of 2015 until July of 2018 to show where evictions are occurring most frequently and the rate at which they are occurring over time. According to the report, New Orleans' renters were evicted at double the national average, with 5.8% of renters experiencing and eviction in 2017. This statistic will most likely be higher in 2019 due to the upward trending direction of property value and rental prices. The report also included information on the racial and class make up of those who are evicted, based on the geographic concentration of evictions in low-income Black neighborhoods, and how the historical legacy of racist valuation systems like redlining are showing themselves to be in effect today, especially the way that property has been recuperated post Katrina.

To get a deeper understanding of how New Orleans went from a de-populated city after Katrina to now facing a massive housing crisis and what local organizing efforts are working to reverse this trend, we interviewed Breonne DeDecker from Jane Place Neighborhood Sustainability

Initiative. JPNSI was officially founded in 2008 as a community land trust but its roots go back to the late 90s in the Mid-City Neighborhood. We asked Breonne to help us understand what exactly “redlining” means and how it applies to the current housing situation in New Orleans. Redlining was a systemic divestment from black communities alongside a systemic investment in white communities and white flight. Not only were a lot of the core neighborhoods that were occupied by black folks systematically divested from before Katrina- like Central City, Treme, Seventh Ward, and Upper Ninth Ward- a lot of those neighborhoods are the same areas that were massively destroyed by the Storm. After Katrina, rebuilding initiatives like the Road Home Program created a racist formula to do recovery funding by paying out settlements based on the appraisal of your home rather than how much it would cost to rebuild your home. And because real estate markets have proven to be racist over generations of home ownership in our country, that means that a three-bedroom house in Lakeview received larger layouts than a three-bedroom house in the Upper Ninth Ward, even if they took the same amount of damage and had the same amount of square footage and needed the same amount of money to repair. This was a denial of resources that left communities very vulnerable to what is occurring now, which is an influx of gentrification capital swooping in and capitalizing on these homes that were twice stolen, the wealth was stolen through redlining in the first place and then stolen again after Katrina when the recovery funding was inequitable. Research is continuing to show even though it was federally prohibited, redlining is still occurring. The number of mortgages denied for African American families versus white families in New Orleans is shocking, particularly in neighborhoods like the Seventh Ward, which are historically Black communities. Evictions and housing cost burden occur more frequently in neighborhoods that are majority black, like the Ninth ward, St. Roch, Central City, Holly grove, Gert Town, and New Orleans East. As the report puts simply, in majority white neighborhoods, between the time the data was collected, 1 in 24 residents experienced an eviction. In majority black neighborhoods, it was 1 in 4. Adding to the precarity of low income renters is not only extremely unfavorable regulatory around tenants’ rights, but an Airbnb frenzy. Breonne further elaborates how Airbnb was able to wedge into the market here:

Gentrification at its core is an economic process. There is this theory that was developed in the seventies and eighties called “the rent gap” that predicts when gentrification is going to occur based off of analyzing potential economic returns. You can look at the economic returns of a community and determine where developers are going to go. “The rent gap” is when evicting a current tenant and rehabbing the property will allow you to get more capitalization and a greater return; it’s the moment when the community exits from economic stasis and into the possibility that you will make more money if you sink a million dollars into rehabbing building than if you let it sit and have the current tenants paying rent. Airbnb massively, massively inflated the rent gap, because the returns a speculator would get from short-term renting a property are so much higher, and often does not even need the owner to renovate the property. The choice was no longer, “Oh you can rent this house to a low-income tenant for \$600/month and then may be a more higher income tenant for \$1000/month,” but, “you can evict this tenant

and get \$500 per night instead.” It changed the underlying math that landlords and developers were using when thinking about housing. Housing was divorced, even more so, from being a social good. It created this frenzy, in some neighborhoods where people were paying \$10, 20, 30,000 dollars more than asking price because they know it wasn’t going to be a home they were living in and it wasn’t going to be a rental property, it was going to be an Airbnb and they understood through their math formula that the money was coming.

All gentrifying cities are struggling with the problem of whole home rentals, which means that a speculator or developer can buy one, to any number of houses, with no intention to live in them, but rather rent them out as a short-term rental. i.e. Companies like Airbnb mediate that economic interaction between short term renter and “home owner,” which allows them to side-step housing regulations. This process of whole-home/short-term renting leads to the rapid displacement of housing stock, often in areas where property valuation is quickly rising. However, the relatively cheap housing stock at the beginning of a boom, the massive amounts of tourism money at stake in New Orleans, combined with the failure to bring poor and black New Orleanians home after Katrina has led to an eviction crisis. This process has culminated in displacing the black social core who built this city and made it into the cultural capital that 17 million of tourists flock to every year. Displacing so effectively that there are now 100,000 less black people in New Orleans than there were before Katrina.

The policy path forward for this problem has been much discussed. Recommendations of JPNSI and other housing justice groups focus on the proposed requirement that any short term rental have a homestead exemption verifying an owner lives on site, theoretically eliminating whole home rentals and the ability of owners to amass multiple properties they operate essentially as hoteliers. Also proposed is what is called a “One-to-One match”. For each STR permitted in a building that building must also “match” and provide one unit of affordable housing. The policies will be voted on in mid-May by New Orleans City Council. Commenting on the ways in which these recommendations have been received by city council and those “homeowners” who defend Airbnb in New Orleans, Breonne lays out the contradiction in investment and housing: *There’s a lot of policing that occurs on the spending habits of low-income people. But we don’t tend to have the same level of policing on the habits of the upper middle class or the wealthy. And there’s a lot of people saying, “Oh I spend a lot of money and bought this house and I flipped it an now its an Airbnb and if you ban this then I’m gonna lose my investment.” And it’s like, well, real estate shouldn’t be treated as a guaranteed investment. That is not the goal of it. In fact, treating the real estate like a guaranteed profit-generating venture is what crashed the global financial markets in 2008, which caused disproportionate harm to Black and Brown communities and helped usher in the housing crisis that cities are grappling with. We shouldn’t be using the state to protect private investments that are actively displacing and dispossessing our community. That is the ultimate argument we make: this is inherently a predatory and displacement based economy and the city should not be in the interest of protecting these speculators.*

Additionally, once the policy around STR's falls into place, there is the work of reporting violations that anyone can and should do. Renters can and should be organizing together to take down Airbnbs and whole-home rentals that threaten affordable housing in their neighborhoods. Regardless of the result of the upcoming May vote in City Council, learning the laws regarding whole home rentals in historic neighborhoods (banned), curfews, or how many nights a year there can be guests and reporting violations has a track record of actually hurting STR owners financially through instigating fines which can result in Airbnb closures.

The Renter's Rights Assembly, which meets at 6:00 pm on the first Thursday of the month at 2533 Columbus Street, is a new group of tenants, renters, and allies formed with the intention of creating mutual aid networks and the strategies to pressure elected officials to enact legislation favorable to tenants. At each meeting, free legal aid is provided to any renter who is facing eviction, harassment, or seeking litigious options against the absentee or neglectful landlord. In their own words, the RRA is: *"a space for tenants, students, and houseless individuals to build power and create space for unimaginable solidarity. Via direct action, mutual aid, outreach and education, we hope to transform not only laws and policies, but also shift societal and cultural norms/expectations around the rights and desires of renters. The right for affordable housing will not just take place in courtrooms and in legislative bodies, but most importantly on the streets."*

Resources built out of assemblage can reveal to us that we are not isolated in our individual transactional situations, and that we can support our neighbors and neighborhoods by creating strong relationships and networks that can defend on another from eviction as well as put pressure on the city to prioritize housing as a right, rather than a vehicle for profit.

The myth that housing is a commodity or asset to accumulate value, rather than a shelter, sanctuary and place to build a life within, has not duped everyone. Besides countless days in the city council and the courts trying to prevent renters from being evicted and stop the cancerous growth of Airbnb on the city. JPNSI is a land trust, which works to create permanent, secure housing that cannot be taken back and flipped by a landlord, bank, or the city. In their words, Community land trusts operate by removing land from the market, which permanently removes it from speculation and the amplification machine that housing and land in urban centers often get trapped into – a cycle of ever-escalating pressures on surrounding neighbors and community members. Community land trusts encourage development without displacement, improve the housing stock, improve the amenities of the neighborhoods but protect people from being pushed out from the success of their own communities. Housing created by community land trusts is permanently affordable- it permanently hold space for low- and moderate-income residents. It is urgent for white transplants (such as the authors of this article) and those with resources outside fo the city to understand that there are historical precedents for some of these neighborhoods, such as the 7th, 8th, and 9th wards, having mixed-race working- and middle-class demographics. However, the segregating forces of redlining and white flight led to an abandonment of these neighborhoods and their black residents suffer devaluation and environmental racism. The resilience of black middle-class communities is well documented in

New Orleans and worth noting here, but it is important to see this as a part of a consistent and predictable American trend, which is the social betrayal by the white working class of black communities' whose resources and culture were built and then shared. In this post-Katrina moment, there are myriad reasons why young, often white people would come and move to predominantly black neighborhoods. Almost all of them can either be traced back to the availability of cheap housing due to segregatory and recuperative policies and the liberative possibilities that black New Orleans culture creates and allows for.

If we are to truly reverse the course of white supremacist displacement and the creation of housing stability and opportunity for black natives, it is vital that we do the work of organizing and mounting pressure through channels of policy but also physically putting our bodies in the way of the landlords, capitol and the police who protect both. We must be aware of the resources available to our neighbors facing sudden eviction. We must have the tools to combat the rapid expansion of Airbnb, but even prior to that we must know our neighbors and the local situation we are all in. How many people on your block own their home? How many rent? How many have had to move due to cost burden or eviction in the last 3 years? How many Airbnbs are near your home? Are they whole-home rentals, and can it be ascertained if multiple are operated by the same people? The trajectory of post-Katrina New Orleans and American urbanism at large is not predetermined. We can work for harm reduction and push back the insidious tendrils of gentrification. We can organize to create models and futures where the value of property is not forefronted and instead access, livability, and choice are.

"I would really urge people not to isolate," as Breonne puts it. "Something that I tell myself all the time, is 'What's the point of having good politics if you don't do anything with them?' That's been my mantra this year. I do not care if your politics are perfect if you are not actually in the fight. If you're not in the fight, you're not my ally."

The presence of an established land trust guided by the people critical of the free market and capitalism's role in housing, and who are committed to the project of decommodifying land and housing is an incredible resource. In a city full of non-profits, many of which profited off of the same funding vacuum post-Katrina as developers, and who seem to be standing behind and often accelerating the rabid development of this city, it can be easy to be cynical when thinking about getting involved in a housing rights struggle. Jane Place and the Renters Rights Assembly, however, can be viewed as a step towards reclaiming the commons and crashing this speculation bubble by taking housing off of the profit driven market and creating permanent territories for the people who built and sustained the spirit of this city.

Photos by Annie Eff

The entire Jane Place NSI report can be found at https://storage.googleapis.com/wzukusers/user-27881231/documents/5c95369d185a9kbj1py4/JPNSI_Evictions_final.pdf

To search a map of about the current forms of redlining explore this app:

<https://apps.revealnews.org/redlining/>

To learn more about displacement in New Orleans check out: www.displacedneworleans.com

Sample 6- Discovering the World of Hosting Airbnb webpage

Discovering the world of hosting

Learn more about the benefits of hosting, how Airbnb protects you, and how to get started.

9 articles · 4 videos

Exploring the basics

The essentials: Get started on Airbnb

From creating your listing to prepping your space, learn how to start hosting.

3 min read

Why host on Airbnb?

Hosts reveal what they love about sharing their space on Airbnb.

3 min video

The basics of hosting on Airbnb

Anyone with space to share can become an Airbnb host—here's how to get started.

2 min read

Is my space a good fit for Airbnb?

There's a perfect guest for every space—the key is setting guest expectations.

4 min read

Unique ways to host on Airbnb

From tiny houses to treehouses, discover more about hosting unique stays.

3 min read

What does Airbnb expect of hosts?

From responding quickly to avoiding cancellations, here's what to focus on.

3 min read

How to earn money on Airbnb

Here's what every host needs to know about pricing and payouts.

3 min read

Building confidence

How Airbnb protects hosts

Learn about Airbnb's built-in protections for hosts.

Feeling protected by Airbnb

Here's how the Host Guarantee can give you the confidence to list your space.

2 min video

What hosting regulations apply to you?

Use this guide to navigate local rules and regulations around Airbnb hosting.

2 min read

Hosting the way you want

Control when you host

Take advantage of Airbnb's flexibility to host whenever you like.

2 min video

Tips for a simple hosting routine

Make hosting easier with tech tools, smart planning, and help from your friends.

4 min read

Your space, your rules

House Rules set guest expectations to ensure a great experience for all

2 min video

Sample 7- Airbnb's Resource Center webpage for New Orleans, Louisiana

New Orleans, LA

When deciding whether to become an Airbnb host, it's important for you to understand the laws in your city. As a platform and marketplace, we do not provide legal advice, but we want to provide some useful links that may help you better understand laws and regulations in New Orleans. This list is not exhaustive, but it should give you a good start in understanding your local laws. If you have questions, contact the Short-Term Rental Administration or other city agencies directly, or consult a local lawyer or tax professional.

Permit updates

The deadline to obtain an owner and operator permit for listings has been extended.

New Orleans' short-term rental permit registration website (onestop.nola.gov) is currently not accepting short-term rental applications. To apply for your short-term rental owner and operator permits, download the application forms, then email your completed form to str@nola.gov.

Short-term rental regulations

Anyone who hosts short-term stays (less than 30 consecutive nights at a time) is required to obtain an owner and operator short-term rental license and display their license numbers on their listing page.

Registration requirements

First, find out which license type your listing is eligible for using the guide below. Then, you can register on the city's website.

I rent my primary residence: If your listing is in a residential zone, you're the property owner, and you have a valid homestead exemption, you may be eligible for an RSTR license. There are 3 different types of RSTR permits: RSTR-Partial, RSTR-Small, RSTR-Large. The type you're eligible for depends on how many units and how many rooms you want to rent out.

I rent my secondary residence (a vacation rental or second home): If your listing is not in a residential zone, you're eligible for a CSTR license.

I'm a tenant or renter: If you get written permission from the property owner or your landlord and your listing is not in a residential zone, you're eligible for a CSTR license.

My listing is in the French Quarter: If your listing is on Bourbon Street, you're eligible for a CSTR license.

I want to list a STR in the Garden District: From December 1, 2019, STR listings are banned in the Garden District.

My listing is in a commercial or mixed use zone: You're eligible for a CSTR license.

I don't have a homestead exemption: A homestead exemption is legal proof that you own your primary residence. The city should have your exemption on file for your property address. If the city has no record of your homestead, you're only eligible for a CSTR license.

I want to list multiple dwelling units (ex: multiple apartments in the same apartment building): If your listing is in a residential zone, you're eligible for the RSTR-Large license. If your listing is in a commercial zone, you're eligible for the CSTR license.

I host a licensed hotel, motel, or bed and breakfast: If you host a licensed hotel, motel, or bed and breakfast, you don't need to add your license numbers to your listing, but you do need to claim an exemption. You can claim an exemption by clicking Register now on your listing, starting

registration, choosing the exemption option, and confirming that your listing is a licensed hotel, motel, or b&b.

License types

The new short-term rental (STR) owner licenses are divided into two categories, Residential STR (RSTR) and Commercial STR (CSTR). There is only one type of CSTR license but there are three types of RSTR licenses. All three types of RSTR licenses require a Homestead Exemption.

Residential Partial Unit (RSTR- Partial)

RSTR-Partial licenses allow property owners to rent up to 5 guest bedrooms to up to 10 guests in 1 dwelling unit such as a townhouse, single-family home, apartment, or condo. Hosts must have a valid homestead exemption in their name and live on the property. Only property owners can get this licence. Renters can't get this license. The fee for this license type is \$250. A host is limited to 1 RSTR-Partial license.

Residential Small (RSTR - Small)

RSTR-Small licenses allow property owners to rent up to 5 guest bedrooms to up to 10 guests in 1 dwelling with no more than 4 dwelling units (i.e. an apartment building with no more than 4 apartments or a single family home with a separate mother-in law unit) Hosts must have a valid homestead exemption in their name and live on the property. Only property owners can get this licence. Renters can't get this license. The fee for this license type is \$500. A host is limited to 1 RSTR-Small license but can have 1 RSTR-Partial license in the same building.

Residential Large (RSTR-Large)

RSTR-Large licenses allow property owners to rent up to 6 guest bedrooms to up to 12 guests in 3 dwelling units in a dwelling with more than 4 dwelling units. For example, this license would let a host rent out 3 separate apartments in the same apartment building if the building has more than 4 apartments. Hosts must have a valid homestead exemption in their name and live on the property. Only property owners can get this license. Renters can't get this license. The fee for this license type is \$500. A host can get up to 3 RSTR-Large licenses.

Commercial (CSTR)

Property owners or renters in non-residential zones can apply for a CSTR license. CSTR licenses allow hosts to rent up to 5 guest bedrooms to up to 10 guests in any building where fewer than 25% of the total dwelling units are currently licensed for STRs. The fee for this license type is \$1000. There is no limit to how many CSTR licenses a host can get.

How to register

Step 1: Apply for your owner license and operator license

You can apply on the city's website. You'll need to create an account, enter your listing information, choose a license type, and update a photo ID. If you're a tenant, you'll also need to upload an affidavit from your landlord saying you have permission to host.

Step 2: Pay for your license

Within 2 weeks, the city will process your application and notify you by email. If you're approved, the city will email you a link to pay for your short-term rental license online.

Step 3: Add your license number to your Airbnb listing

As a last step, you'll need to add both your owner license number and your operator license number to your listing to finalize your registration with the city. Once you add your license numbers, your registration will be complete and you can continue hosting short-term stays.

General information

The city provides general information about rules and regulations on its Short terms Rentals page. This includes contact information for the STR Administration. You can also find out about the legislation adopted by the City Council to authorize short term rentals. On May 24, 2018, the New Orleans City Council passed a motion creating a 9-month Interim Zoning District (IZD) prohibiting certain types of short-term rental licenses in particular zoning districts. Get additional information on the IZD appeal process.

Taxes and fees

As of January 1, 2017, Airbnb now collects and remits taxes to the City of New Orleans on behalf of its users. Find out more about that process. If you rent on other platforms in addition to Airbnb, you are responsible for collecting and reporting the taxes and fees from any rental arrangement made on those other platforms or through any other means. For more information, visit the Short Term Rental Taxation page.

Zoning restrictions

Only specific types of short term rentals are allowed in specific zoning districts. For more information, visit the Short Term Rental Zoning Restrictions page.

Other rules

It's also important to understand and abide by other contracts or rules that bind you, such as leases, condo board or co-op rules, HOA rules, or rules established by tenant organizations. Please read your lease agreement and check with your landlord if applicable.

Our commitment to your community

We're committed to working with local officials to help them understand how Airbnb benefits our community. Where needed, we'll continue to advocate for changes that will allow regular people to rent out their own homes.

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VITA

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